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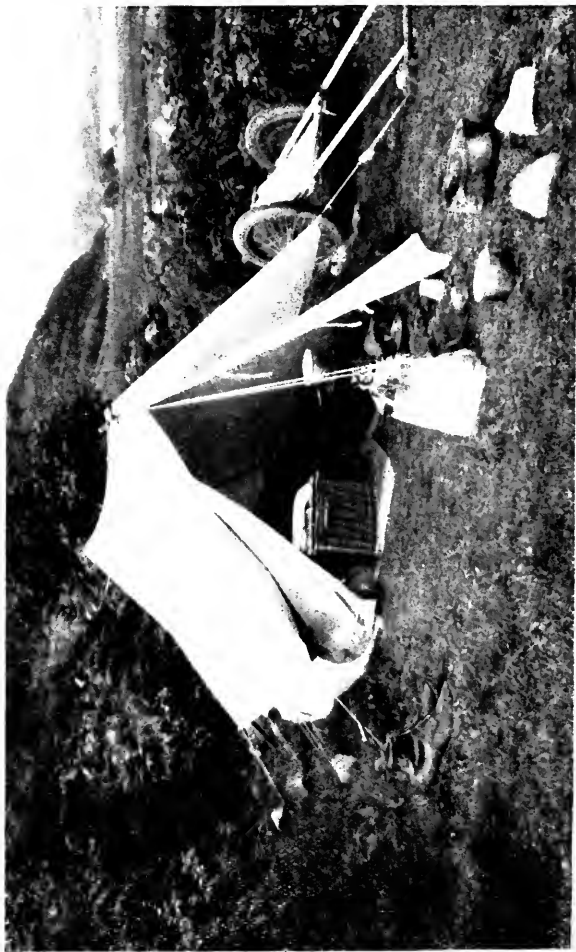
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## HOLIDAYS IN TENTS









A TREK-CART CAMP.

*Frontispiece.*

# HOLIDAYS IN TENTS

BY

W. M. CHILDS



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

1921

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TO  
THE FARMERS  
ENGLISH AND WELSH  
WHO ON MANY OCCASIONS  
HAVE WELCOMED ME A  
STRANGER WITHIN  
THEIR GATES

866462

## NOTE

For the photographs in this book my thanks are due to my friend, Mr J. W. DODGSON, and to my son, RODERICK.

I am indebted to the proprietors of *The Times* for permission to reprint "A Lonely Llyn" (Chapter xvii).

W. M. C.

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# HOLIDAYS IN TENTS

## I

### THE CAMPER'S APOLOGY

"There are enough champions of civilization."—  
THOREAU.<sup>1</sup>

"Nature, that universal and publick Manuscript, that lies  
expans'd unto the Eyes of all."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.<sup>2</sup>

"There come moments to every man when he is thankful to be alive, and every breath drawn is a delight ; so at that hour I praised my Maker for His good earth, and for sparing me to rejoice in it."—JOHN BUCHAN.<sup>3</sup>

"What do you want to go campin' for ? 'Aven't you got a 'ome ?"—PASSING CRITIC.

THIS little book has been written partly as a holiday exercise, and partly in the hope that it may be of interest and perhaps of use to persons whose tastes are akin to mine. I do not flatter myself that anything I may say will induce people to go camping who are not inclined to do so already. We cannot be argued into enjoyment, though we can

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Walking.*

<sup>2</sup> *Religio Medici.*

<sup>3</sup> *Salute to Adventurers.*

easily be bored if other people over-praise their pleasures to us. "All that each man holds dearest may seem illusion to another." Nor is it likely that the tame chronicle of a holiday camper in the home country can contain anything worthy the notice of sportsmen and explorers, who with a completeness to which any pretence by me would be absurd have cut themselves off from civilization and gone into the wilds. I am content with a more modest hope. Camping holidays, scattered over twenty-five years and taken in different parts of the country in all seasons and weathers, have taught me something, both as to the pleasure to be gained, and as to the mysteries of the art. It may be that other holiday campers, or intending campers, may profit here and there by what I have to say; and, as I hope, be fortified in their devotion to a most delightful recreation.

For camping, though it often brings hard work and demands patience and resource, is delightful to those who care for the kind of pleasure which it brings. That

pleasure is keen and various. I am not sure which is the most enjoyable, the anticipation of a camping holiday among new scenes, or the making of plans and preparations for it, or the actual holiday itself. Once the idea of an expedition has taken shape in the mind, I doubt if there are many kinds of literature as enthralling as the one-inch ordnance map. In the designing and making of equipment, there can be something of the artist's satisfaction, if only to the extent of creating things apt for their purposes. It is cheering to discover how many things we can do without; and there is a pleasure in adapting means to ends, and reducing essentials to their handiest form. Whoever has a turn for contrivance can give full play to it in camping; and still the ideal tent and its equipment will haunt his imagination and spur him to fresh effort. And then when the longed-for day has come at last, when the railway journey is behind us, and we reach our ground, can any other form of holiday give us a happier hour, if fortune is kindly?

We have come, perhaps, to a sequestered glen. The scarred and coloured slopes of mountains rise upon either hand. The wild freedom of their forms appeals to us with new power after long exile in the lowland. A river winds at their feet, now gently gliding, now plunging from pool to pool. For a little while, resting in the shade, we survey these things, and debate whether we shall pitch our tents here or there. Under this wall and hedge will be the best shelter; but yonder the turf is smoother and the river nearer. The point decided, a task of never-failing fascination begins. Bales and packages, poles and hampers, lie upon the grass in disarray, just as the cart discharged them. Like Robinson Crusoe, it would be possible, if need were, to "barricado yourself with chests and boards . . . and make a kind of hut for that night's lodging." But our ambition soars beyond huts. Very soon the tents arise in order due, and stores and belongings find their way to their proper places. The milk-can makes its first



A VALLEY IN WALES.





journey to the farm: and never surely was the rattle of cups and plates more welcome. By the taking of that first meal, home is made, and camp law begins its reign. Much remains to do, but already design has mastered confusion, and the heat and toil are over. Towards sunset there may be time to get out a trout rod, and sample the evening rise. Last comes the hour when youth has fallen happily asleep, but when seniors lie awake, listening contentedly to the song of the river, and to the voices of bird and beast which now and again break the stillness.

Every camping holiday has these golden hours. They belong chiefly to the summer, but summer has no monopoly of lovely scenes. Here is a note from a Carmarthen-shire valley in the opening days of April:

“Last night was still and cold. The stars were brilliant. When I looked out of the tent in the morning it was to behold an exquisite fairyland. Hill and vale, every crag and blade of grass, were shimmering with hoar frost. A curtain of white vapour drifted across the ravine

up-stream, and the river issued darkly from it. Above the hill-crests stretched two long narrow white clouds: and above these again was the clear heaven and serene sunshine. All was still, white, and glistening, delicately and purely lovely: a bridal dress of morning."

We are, indeed, too ready to think that natural beauty belongs only or chiefly to the height of summer. Yet remembered moments are those when the westering sun pours a rosy light upon snowclad hills. The aspect of nature may be more austere in April than in August: yet among the hills and glens the colouring can be richer. The slopes are splashed with russet, the dead bracken of last year; and after rain these patches become a deeper red. A darker hue is worn by the heather, and by the lichens which grow upon the outcrops of rock. The larches are green-tipped: the silver birches a purpling red. Among the brown tussocks of the moor, the new blades are pushing to the light. April rivers are commonly full of life: every valley resounds with their music.

Even the end of a camp, and the hour of farewell, though inseparable from regrets, can be redeemed by the memory of beauty which it leaves behind. A note of one last September night says :

“We had supper. I went to the farm to see O—— about the cart. Then, while the boys turned in, I took a stroll down the lane. No more magnificent evening can be possible in our country. It was cloudless, windless, and very still, save for the call of some wading bird, an occasional rustling of invisible wings, and the low sound of the river and of waves on the sand. The west was a fading glory : right opposite, the great harvest moon was already high. In the oat-field the standing sheaves were magnified, and cast solemn shadows. All round the northern horizon were the vague and dusky shapes of mountains. I turned back ; . . . our holiday was over.”

Not all the camper's days and nights, however, will be halcyon ; and it would falsify camping experience and fail to explain its hold upon us, if it were pretended that nothing rough goes with the smooth. Camping, as it is conceived in these pages, is not lounging and lazing. It is not just

a fine weather pastime. It is a pursuit to be practised in all weathers and at all seasons, though its reward is least in those months when the hours of daylight are so few. Its charm is in the variety of its experiences: the being abroad in all weathers, the taking of fortune as it comes, the alternations of rest and ease with energetic action. And, upon the whole, it is the weather which calls the tune. Those who pass their time in houses seldom come to really close quarters with this masterful factor. They escape much which no judicious person would count as pleasurable. In the dark hours, the house-keeper lies in his comfortable bed behind stout walls; and the assault of wind and rain, frost and snow, concerns him hardly at all. It is otherwise with the camper in his frail tent. He is instantly sensitive to every mood and trick of the elements, whether they deal buffets or caresses. He has come into the open for his playtime, and the weather can be as mighty as well as a gentle playmate. Indeed, if I had the temerity to claim for

camping the dignity of a sport, it would be on the ground that the camper with a minimum of defensive armour goes out to encounter nature in all her moods. He may be rudely handled: there may come times when he will be tempted to wish himself elsewhere; but in retrospect he will surely feel that the trials he has overcome have been the salt of his adventure. Therein and thus far he is a sportsman. He takes more chances than the angler, whose pride it is to measure his skill and fine tackle against the strength and cunning of heavy fish. For, after all, though the angler may lose his fish, the fish is not likely to drown the angler. The weather, on the other hand, seems sometimes as if it must prevail against the camper's little tent with its delicate fabric and slender poles. The camper engages himself in the effort to prevent its doing anything of the kind. Come what may, the weather shall not worst him, neither the snow and frost of early spring, nor the torrential downpours of treacherous August, nor the autumnal

storms, nor the long nights of December. "The taking of rain and sun alike," says Meredith, "befits men of our climate, and he who would have the secret of a strengthening intoxication must court the clouds of the south-west with a lover's blood."

Some may think that to talk thus of our temperate English climate is to talk too seriously. Yet our climate, though free from catastrophic extremes, can be extraordinarily variable and perverse, and whoever goes camping long enough will learn to respect its resources in this way. The August of 1919, for example, though a fine month upon the whole, gave us in North Wales both drought and flood, excessive heat and inclement cold, days and nights of calm beauty, and spells of violent wind. The 11th of the following September was in most parts of the country the hottest day of the summer, the shaded temperature rising above 85 degrees in many districts. A few days later the temperature had dropped below freezing point even on

the south coast, and hills and mountains from Ben Lomond to Dartmoor were covered with snow. For all such contingencies the camper must be prepared. If he wearies of the contest, if he dislikes the blend of ease and labour, careless enjoyment and active precaution, if bad weather makes him miserable, he may betake himself again to the ministrations of bedsteads, houses, and servants. The ills of life may pursue him even there, but at least they will come in more familiar guise. But rather let him remember that in all fine pleasure something is required of us. Camping asks for understanding, patience, and a little skill; and this is one of the secrets of its hold upon us. And, after all, even the vilest weather is often stimulating. Most of us have discovered that a walk in a down-pour has a joy of its own. When things are at their worst, the camper often feels a secret satisfaction that he is not elsewhere, and that he can measure himself against the unkind conditions, and not lose his love of the camper's life. From a

youthful log-book I take this impulsive note :

“This evening, after a quiet Sunday, we had a dreary spell of wet. Just as I began to tackle the evening’s cookery at the outer fire, down came the rain. I went in for oilskins, and with a bit of canvas for my feet, which were bare, I squatted down to my job, which happened to be a long one, on a log before the fire. It was chilly enough in the pattering rain, even though the fire scorched my legs. Yet this weather too has its joy. I looked up once, and felt suddenly the forlornness of it all. Out to sea,—what was visible of it through the mist and dark,—nothing could be more mournful. The clamour of yesterday had died down to a moaning. Above and around was mist and wet. The shapes of the hills and cliffs were blurred : masses of cloud and rain folded them in. In all that expanse, there was nothing which was not dreary and chilling, except the fire at my feet and the tent behind me. Yet I sat on, peering through the smoke into my pots, glad that fate had sent us into the wilderness to know these things as well as its joys.”

So true is it that the camper endures much which no judicious person would count as pleasurable.



Enough has been said to make it clear that camping is not the kind of holiday to be adopted by everyone indiscriminately. The aged and infirm are not likely to commit themselves to tents: nor is camp an ideal place for infants in arms. Apart from the obviously unfit, there are others who are wise to leave camping alone. Some persons recoil from the idea of existence in a tent. It seems, perhaps, a descent from the status of a civilized being. Their instinct may be right, and perhaps they do well to leave the experiment to those less careful of appearances. Many people are dependent for entertainment upon social activity, or upon the allurements of places of resort; and for such as these, solitude can have no charms. Others cannot reconcile with their personal dignity what seems to them and in truth is a form of vagabondage. Let their view also pass unchallenged. Others cannot conceive of existence without servants, and these too we must leave to their fate. Others, again, will consent to camp if the programme

and company are to their mind, and if no share of responsibility falls upon themselves. Among these we may find excellent companions, but they are not often the stuff of which campers are made. They can never bring themselves to love and understand a tent and its economy. If they go camping on their own account, they are likely to get into difficulties, and thus camping gets a bad name. Let us, then, not over-persuade any to our confusion.

The truth is, as Izaak Walton said of angling, that if we are to become campers without repentance we must have "a love and propensity for the art itself." The idea must attract us: the mind must dwell longingly upon the freedom and peculiar merits of the life in tents; and either we must have some aptitude for the work to be done, or we must be willing to take the trouble to acquire it. This is the root of the matter: and if it is within us, the rest is easy and its own reward. The strange thing is that since

the idea of living for a time in beautiful and remote places in perfect freedom, of renewing inner peace by a spell of solitude, or of exploring in leisurely fashion a wide tract of interesting country, appeals to so many who are not destitute of practical capacity, more do not spend their holidays in this way. Consider, for example, the healthiness of it. I have never known camping produce any ailment worth mentioning, except sunburn. To live by day and, one might almost say, by night also, "commoners of nature," in the open and moving air is in itself invigorating and healing to jaded minds and bodies. "It is only when you occupy yourself in the air by day and sleep in the air by night that you know the full blessedness of awaking in the morning with every faculty alert."<sup>1</sup> The first thing which strikes a camper on his return to houses is the stagnancy of their atmosphere. Some people are afraid of chills and colds; but with a good tent and groundsheet

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Scott-James, *An Englishman in Ireland*.

and common sense there is not the smallest risk of damp. I have come to camp with an obstinate cold and have lost it within three days. Persistent wet is certainly troublesome; it can spoil tempers, but I never knew it make anybody ill. Wet or fine, the camper's appetite never fails, and what he desires most is plain and wholesome food. Children thrive in camp as I have never seen them thrive elsewhere. I have known a convalescent recover health with marvellous speed in camp, notwithstanding continuous bad weather. Other kinds of holiday may be as healthy: none, I think, can be healthier. I believe that many persons of both sexes, who suffer from chronic over-busyness, or from some real or imaginary minor ailment, would find in camping a sovereign restorative.

There is, indeed, more to be said. The war disclosed to us some disquieting facts about the physical condition of many of our younger men. This is too large a question to discuss here, but it cannot be

doubted that the problem is more than physical, and that one of the routes to a higher standard lies through reasonable holidays which refresh both body and spirit. It is often overlooked that the specialized and mechanical occupations which so many of us are forced to follow are not really natural. They tend to over-develop some of our faculties and capacities at the cost of others, to impose injurious strains, and to subject us to an ill-balanced monotony of routine which is clean against nature. It is very doubtful, for example, if nature has any real sympathy with persons who pride themselves that they work only with their brains. Correctives are required, and among these correctives is the right use of recreative periods. Not everyone will prefer the solitudes of nature to the organized excitements of Brighton or Blackpool; but many would if they had the chance, and knew how to seize it. For such persons the camp, with its simplicity and economy, its easefulness

and its varied demands upon our energy, is the very thing. If our over-busy and over-regulated lives make us crave for rest and freedom, let us go in search of these blessings with a tent. In camp, for once, you can be your own master. There, at least, you can escape the tyranny of servants, the society of the vacuous, and the uproar of an age of chatter. You can pitch your tent in places where the postman never comes, and the yelp of motors is never heard. By living thus you can cut beneath the crust of conventional pleasures, appraised in terms of money, and come to understand the "unbought grace of life." "The commonest things—a dash of cool water on the wrists, a gulp of hot tea, a warm, dry blanket, a whiff of tobacco, a ray of sunshine—are more really luxuries than all the comforts and sybaritisms we buy."<sup>1</sup> "To whom," says one of the hardest of modern adventurers, "is a pipe so sweet as to one camping out under the stars

<sup>1</sup> *The Forest*, by Stewart E. White.

after the day's work?"<sup>1</sup> If the incapacities of middle age are stealing upon us, if we find ourselves reluctant to walk a few miles, or climb a hill, or run a few yards, or climb a fence, or ford a stream, or stoop, or get hot, or get cold, or get wet, or get dirty, or sit upon the ground, or carry a pack on the shoulder, or go out in foul weather, let us go into camp, live plainly, do all our work for ourselves, and bring into active play the muscles and faculties which a sedentary occupation and insidious comforts are allowing to perish from disuse. Half the infirmities of middle age are due to the premature abandonment or life-long neglect of active exertion in the open air. That a camping holiday is a boon to the young needs no demonstration to those who have seen its results; but it is less often understood that it can be the salvation of the middle-aged.

The camper can make holiday in delightful places otherwise beyond his reach.

<sup>1</sup> E. F. Knight in *The Cruise of the 'Alerte.'*

Every year scenes of quiet beauty, with house accommodation, become harder to find by persons who cannot afford the longest journeys. New and noisy methods of locomotion are rapidly destroying the remoteness and the peace which once gave charm and dignity to many a village and countryside. Bungalows and hotels start up like blisters: little places once endowed with a modest and native character of their own fling their treasure to the winds and array themselves in the vulgar and standardized finery of pretentious resorts: the roar of traffic reverberates brutally through many of the wilder tracts of country. Here and there remain villages with the unviolated demeanour of a happier age, and pleasant it is to stay in them. But such villages are fewer than they were: and even the least spoiled is far removed in spirit and aspect from the lonely glen or sea cove. It is the note of wildness, the sense of solitude, the old simplicities, which make to some natures so strong an appeal. We need not go so far as Thoreau, who



protested that he would rather dwell in a dismal swamp than in the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived; but we may agree with Mr Hudson when he tells us that "the wildness, the wide horizon, and sense of liberty" create in us a feeling of elation when we find ourselves "among mountains, on moors, in vast desolate marshes, on iron-bound coasts, and on wide sea-side flats and saltings."<sup>1</sup> And if this spell of the wilds is what we seek, the best and for many of us often the only way to gain it is to pack up our tents and go to it. The caravan must stick to the hard road, but the camper can go wherever he can find means to carry his light equipment. If he wishes to read or write, he can make his study where none can interrupt him: if angling, or sketching, or natural history, or archaeology is his quest, he can establish himself on the very scene of action; and if he wishes to take his ease in a stationary camp he can find occupation without fatigue. "There offered little

<sup>1</sup> *Nature in Downland*, by W. H. Hudson.

things to do, delicious little things just on the hither side of idleness. A rod-wrapping needed more waxed silk; a favourite fly required attention to prevent dissolution: the pistol was to be cleaned; a flag-pole seemed desirable: a trifle more of balsam could do no harm; clothes might stand drying, blankets airing. We accomplished these things leisurely, pausing for the telling of stories, for the puffing of pipes, for the sheer joy of contemplation.”<sup>1</sup>

Camping holidays can claim two other advantages which some will estimate as highly as any that have been mentioned. For boys and girls, camping is splendid and invigorating fun. There may be exceptions, but surely few. In camp there seems to be no risk of boredom; wet or fine, the spirits of children never seem to flag; and there at least we need not vex our souls about “organized games.” The whole thing is a game in earnest. The excitement of arrival, the choosing of the sites, the pitching of the tents, the building of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Forest*, by Stewart E. White.

fire-place, the possibilities of the stream, the making of the bathing-pool, the unpacking of stores, and the endless arranging and contriving, make the first day a day of exaltation. Indeed, the only trouble that young campers know is the swift approach of the day of departure: though when the day comes there is so much to do that sadness is overpowered. This delight which children take in camping is a very natural thing. The life blends in right measures the elements of play and earnest. There is no anarchy, but the common law of decorous households runs there only in part. And besides the freedom, there is romance and the fulfilment of dreams. Then, too, there is always something to be done; bathing, explorations, damming of streams, castle-building, fishing, boat sailing, black-berrying, photography, and the like. In the tents, there are games to be played, maps to be studied, and books to be read. And besides pleasure and amusement, there is work. It does not amount to much, but done it must be; for even to the childish

mind it is apparent that necessity compels. Beds must be put away, or aired in the sun, or made at night. Errands must be done ; for supplies must be had, and letters must be fetched or posted. Meals must be prepared, water carried from the spring, fuel gathered, and the fire tended. After each meal comes the wash-up, and in this all must help. Boots must occasionally be cleaned, and there comes a time when even the youngest campers must sweep out their tent and tidy it. It is a very good thing for boys and girls to look after themselves in this way. They learn much that will be always useful to them. They find out that there can be no leisure without work, their own or somebody else's ; and they are likely to think of a servant's task with more respect. Self-dependence is developed : shirking is instantly found out ; and though a camp is not a school, and should be as free as possible from constraint, valuable lessons are there learned.

A second advantage of camping is its economy. This is so obvious that it can

be dismissed in few words. The main expenditure in camping is the first equipment. But this will hardly amount to more, and may easily be much less, than the sum which many people are in the habit of paying year by year for the rent of summer quarters.<sup>1</sup> Once bought, camp equipment, if duly cared for, will last for years with only a small annual outlay on renewals and improvements. As for rent of site, it may vary from nothing to perhaps 10s. a week: it depends a good deal upon the locality, the length of stay, and other considerations. In some cases, the farmer on whose land the tents are pitched is sufficiently recompensed by the purchase of dairy produce and vegetables, and by payments for the carriage of equipment. One or two presents or gratuities will be appropriate after a long stay, but they will not usually amount to more than would be thus expended under other holiday circumstances. The heavier part of the

<sup>1</sup> I assume here that camp equipment for a family of six or eight persons is required. A camp outfit for one or two persons would, of course, cost very much less.

camp equipment must travel by goods train, but the cost is not likely to be much unless the distances and weight are unusually great.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, the camper may live more cheaply in camp than anywhere else. He will probably spend less on food than he does at home. Nothing is wasted, and the simplest food is the most welcome. The incidental expenses of a popular resort—trams, luxury shops, boating charges, entertainments, pier dues, and the like—do not exist. Figures and accounts, therefore, are not needed to demonstrate the economy of a holiday such as this. It should, however, be noted that the length of stay in camp ought to be not less than a fortnight or three weeks; and it should be longer, if possible. Otherwise, the initial outlay and the work of preparation and removal might seem hardly worth while.

I close this *apologia* with a few lines

<sup>1</sup> It used to cost about 12s. to send 5 cwt. of camp equipment from Reading to North Wales, but goods rates have been raised, and the cost would now (1921) be considerably more.

taken from the log-book of a camp in the New Forest :

“To get the best out of camping, one must have a genuine love of the country and of nature. It is not necessary to be a naturalist, though I often wish my knowledge of natural history was less scanty. But country sights and sounds must appeal to you not merely sentimentally but really ; not just as accessories to some diversion, but for their own sake. There should be a feeling of kinship with solitary places. The sound of running water by day and by night is a lovely thing ; so is wind in a forest, or sea breaking upon rocks. So, too, are the shapes and blossoms of trees, the flight and call of birds, mountain forms and hues at the close of day, and moonlight over a wide expanse. There is nothing exceptional in a love of these things : few would disclaim it. The camper should find in them a constant and unfailing delight, and perhaps he should love them best when in his solitude there is nothing to distract his mind from their contemplation. Society is a good thing ; solitude may be an evil thing, if we have too much of it. But in our modern life few of us get the solitude we need ; and usually we do not see or feel nearly as much in nature as we might, just because our minds are restless, out of tune, and taken up with trivial or irrelevant things. There are many kinds of enjoyment

and good to be got out of camping, but this storing of the "inward eye" with memories of beauty is, I think, the best and most enduring. It may be said that to see and enjoy all these things one need not live in a tent. It is quite true. Let us away with all arrogant pose. But I feel this: if I take a walk across a moor with great prospects, or among mountains, or by jolly streams with rocks and thickets, far from the haunts of men, my desire always is to spend a day and a night just here or just there. What I do not want to do is to go back at once to common life. I cannot explain it further, but I believe many people feel like this, and I think that all those who do are natural campers."



## II

### THE KINDS OF CAMPING

“ You should have heard him speak of what he loved ; of the tent pitched beside the talking water ; of the stars overhead at night ; of the blest return of morning, the peep of day over the moors, the awaking birds among the birches ; how he abhorred the long winter shut in cities : and with what delight, at the return of spring, he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors.”—R. L. STEVENSON.<sup>1</sup>

“ In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth.”—MILTON.

THERE are different kinds of camping, and though many of the remarks and suggestions in this book are of general application, it will be well for the sake of clearness to specify them.

#### (1) *Pedestrian Camping.*

To travel on foot and carry all you need upon your back is to achieve a rare degree

<sup>1</sup> *Across the Plains.*

of independence. The walker, disdaining roads and frequented paths, can push into the hills and camp in places which no vehicle, not even the cycle, and no horse or pony, however sure-footed and docile, can reach. The pedestrian camper, however, is confronted by one difficulty in its acutest form: namely, the load. No doubt this difficulty is lessened if two or three people camp together. A tent and equipment for two or for three, will not, for example, be twice or three times as heavy as for one. On the other hand, the ideal seems to be a manageable outfit for one; for if there is any charm in camping alone, it is the walker who is likely to find it. It is claimed that the outfit for one can be reduced to a weight which is not burdensome, but such inventories as I have examined in books have always been incomplete. Opinions will vary as to what is or is not indispensable, and no limit can be set to the degree of hardship or discomfort which an enthusiast is willing to undergo. If we are to have a weatherly tent, comfort at night, an efficient cooking apparatus, good protection against wet when

on the march, and food for—let us say—two days, we shall find it difficult to pack all these requirements within manageable compass and weight. Nevertheless, it can be done, and the problem is certainly one of the most interesting that camping presents. There is room for much contrivance; every half ounce calls for scrutiny, and the camper will find himself revising his lists again and again. It will not be easy to bring the load, apart from food, much below 20 lb.<sup>1</sup> On a later page<sup>2</sup> an account will be given of a short camping tour carried out under these conditions.

### (ii) *Cycle Camping.*

Cycle camping is now very popular, and possesses appliances, clubs, and a literature of its own. It is as delightful as it is feasible. Though lightness and compactness are still governing considerations, the cyclist is not so pressed on the score of weight as the pedestrian. A bicycle will carry anything up to 40 lbs. without serious incon-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Mr Warren H. Miller in *Camp Craft*, p. 67. "20 lbs. exclusive of grub." He includes air-cushions (3 $\frac{3}{4}$  lbs.).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XV.

venience, except perhaps when pushing up the steepest ascents. More than that weight can be carried if the pace is leisurely, the gradients gentle, and the day's journey moderate. A loaded bicycle can be walked almost anywhere. I have thus taken a camp kit nearly 2,000 feet up a mountain side.

If we disregard motors, with which this book does not deal, cycle camping is the most mobile variety of camping. With a light outfit and fair weather, long distances can be covered, and the cost of a holiday falls to a minimum. Much ingenuity has been devoted to the design of suitable tents and equipment. Something will be said on the subject of strength *versus* lightness on a later page.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, unnecessary to describe here the various kinds of tent equipment in detail, since excellent books on the subject already exist.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) *Boat Camping.*

As practised on the Thames, the boating camp seems rather a tame variety of the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix.

camper's art. There are two modes: either the camper sleeps in his boat, which is roofed for the night with canvas stretched over hoops, or he carries a tent, which he pitches in the permitted places, or anywhere else at his peril. My own experience is that the Thames below Oxford has become too popular and sophisticated a highway to allow of camping being anything but an expurgated and savourless edition of the real thing. If, however, we care to go further afield, the opportunities of the boat camp are great. For example, a friend of mine has written a delightful account of a camping tour on the Shannon.<sup>1</sup> Mr Macdonnell's book, *Camping Out*, contains useful information about rivers and canals both in this country and abroad.<sup>2</sup>

An advantage of boat camping is that weight of equipment, within reason, matters little. In this respect it is superior to any other form of mobile camping. Though we cannot leave our watery highway, rivers and

<sup>1</sup> *An Englishman in Ireland*, by R. A. Scott-James.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix.

canals often pass through beautiful scenery. The finest approach to some ancient towns is by the river. "No one," says Mr Belloc, "has seen Ely who has not seen it from the Ouse." He also says, "There is nothing of the history of England but is on a river, and as England is an island of birds, so is it more truly an island of rivers." <sup>1</sup>

(iv) *Trek-cart Camping.*

If several persons, possessing among them youth and activity, wish to make a camping expedition together, there is perhaps no more enjoyable way of carrying out their idea than by means of a trek-cart, which they themselves will haul. Trek-cart expeditions are often undertaken by Boy Scouts, and excellent little carts are expressly made to meet their needs. It is quite possible, however, and less expensive, to buy an axle and a pair of wheels, and to design and make the cart-body and shafts at home. To get the best out of a

<sup>1</sup> *On Everything.*

trekking expedition a suitable part of the country must be chosen for it, the programme must not be too arduous, and the load must be moderate. The district should be thinly peopled, and villages and main roads should be avoided as far as possible. A country of hills and moors, crossed by rough tracks, with farmhouses here and there, is excellent. Often it is possible to push far into the hills by following a river valley. In a country of rough tracks and steep pitches the day's journey will not exceed a few miles, for pace is not the object and can only be leisurely. A party of six or eight people will find it better to take two light carts rather than one of larger and heavier build. They can thus put all their strength to each cart separately when they come to difficult ascents. If they are willing not to hurry, they will find that they can take their carts almost anywhere. A week's food can be carried; and, having no horse or pony to trouble about, the trek-cart camper is as independent as the cyclist.

(v) *Stationary Camping.*

Stationary camping explains itself. The main differences between this form of camping and the others are that more care should be taken in choosing the locality and site, larger and heavier tents can be used, and a more comprehensive equipment can be employed. No other kind of camping rivals the permanent camp in simplicity and ease; or, upon the other hand, in the opportunity it affords for thorough organization. Much of what is said in these pages refers to permanent camps.

This book does not deal with the caravan. Whether caravanning, even if supplemented by tents, can properly be called a branch of camping is perhaps doubtful. In any case, the subject deserves and has received treatment by persons with an experience of caravan design and management to which I make no claim. The inquirer is referred to these authorities.<sup>1</sup> For a like reason, nothing will be said here of the distinctive

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.



features of that kind of mobile camping which relies on horses or ponies as means of carrying tents and equipment. Valuable hints with regard to pack-saddles and equipment are given in more than one of the books to which the reader is referred in the Appendix.

### III

## LOCALITY AND SITE

“ England of my heart is a great country of hill and valley, moorland and marsh, full of woodlands, meadows, and all manners of flowers, and everywhere set with steadings and dear homesteads, old farms and old churches of gray stone or flint, and peopled by the kindest and quietest people in the world.”—EDWARD HUTTON.<sup>1</sup>

“ The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind.”—THOMAS HARDY.<sup>2</sup>

“ I found a little Plain on the side of a rising Hill, whose Front towards this little Plain was as steep as a House-side, so that nothing could come down upon me from the Top ; on the side of this Rock there was a hollow Place worn a little way in like the Entrance or Door of a Cave, but there was not really a Cave or Way into the Rock at all. On the Flat of the Green, just before this hollow Place, I resolv'd to pitch my Tent.”—DEFOE.

LET it be granted that a family or party of half a dozen members proposes to spend a summer holiday in a fixed camp. It will be well for this decision to be taken early

<sup>1</sup> *England of my Heart.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Return of the Native.*

in the year, for there are preparations to be made, and perhaps a preliminary visit may be necessary. Most of us who love the country, and whose lot it is to work in towns, where the passage of the seasons too often seems an irrelevance, begin to feel restless when May ushers in the full promise of summer. The first freshness of summer, when all nature speaks hopefully and even exultingly of glories to come, will have passed away before duty releases us. We may not abandon ourselves to the splendid riot of June: yet August and September, the period when most of us take our holidays, have their own charms, though our enjoyment of these months depends, I think, more upon where we spend them than it does in May or June.

The first question to be settled will be—Whither are we to go? This is a question which every party will decide for itself. Much will depend upon what we want to do when holiday-making, upon our attachment to particular places, upon our estimate of local climate and scenery, and not least

upon the question of expense. But whatever may be the route to our decision, it will be agreed that our camping-place must be quiet and secluded. It is intolerable when camping to be constantly harassed by the scrutiny of prying eyes. No place, therefore, is likely to commend itself which lies within a populous area, or adjoins a summer resort or a town, or is overlooked or disturbed by public traffic.

To gain a peaceful retreat, however, it is not necessary to go many miles from the railway, the high-road, or the nearest source of supplies. The solitary camper can, of course, bury himself in the wilderness if he likes: but if a party does this, the maintenance of supplies may become difficult. Privacy and every desired condition can usually be secured for a permanent camp by turning aside from the main road, and penetrating a little way into the hills, or woods, or moorland; or by choosing a nook upon the coast, or by the river, which is not in the direct line of tourist traffic. The camper has reason to be grateful for the

tenacity with which the tourist host sticks to the beaten track. Both in Cornwall and in Wales I have camped without molestation at spots of singular beauty not far from high-roads traversed every hour of the day by vehicles taking tourists for their regulated outings.

Let us suppose, then, that we have chosen our district. We must next choose a camping site. The ideal camping site is hard to find. The lure of it haunts the imagination. A lawn of turf, delicately fine, gay with flowerets, gently sloping and quickly dry after rain; a subsoil gravelly, yet giving a firm hold to tent-pegs; a background of shelter ample and protective from the stormy south and west, yet a prospect of rolling moorland and craggy heights; a talking stream in the dingle just below, lacing the hillside with cascades and pools fringed with fern and trembling flowers; a spring brimming from a mossy crevice in the living rock; the shade of trees close by, yet no envious boughs to rob the camp of the beneficent sun; a site easily accessible,

yet secluded and unprofaned; a post-office and village stores at the end of a pleasant walk; a friendly farm near by, yet not within sight or sound; rivers and lakes teeming with trout hungry for the fly; and a total immunity from horses, cattle, pigs, and thieving dogs. Add a glimpse of sea, and we have perhaps as many of the ingredients of a happy stay as mortal campers can desire or deserve.

If the site proposed is familiar ground, the task of selection will be easy; but if not, now will be the time to consult the one-inch ordnance map, the Bartholomew half-inch map, and any guide-books we can obtain. The maps will disclose a great deal to anyone who studies them with care, but their verdict is seldom quite conclusive, except perhaps negatively. If it is still doubtful whether a good site can be secured, it is generally better to go beforehand, if possible, and look at the ground for oneself rather than trust to the report of others. Unless the person consulted is himself a camper, he may fail to realize the conditions

requisite for a good pitch. The most unsuitable suggestions are often put forward by well-meaning friends. Good sites are not common: in some kinds of country they are very scarce; and it is exasperating to find on arrival that, notwithstanding confident reports, hours of tedious search lie before you.

It may, therefore, be useful to set down the main conditions which must be satisfied. In the first place, the proposed site must not only be attractive in itself, but it must be reasonably accessible. The weight and bulk of equipment, supplies, and personal luggage for a party of six, who propose to camp for a month, are not trifling. It should not take a whole day to transport all these things from the station to the site, nor should each package have to be carried laboriously by hand over a final quarter of a mile of difficult ground. In other words, the railway should preferably be within five miles; there should be a tolerable road thence to the neighbourhood of the camp; and it should be possible to

bring a cart close to the site. In heroic mood we may disdain these counsels. I have often done so myself; but if we do, we must be prepared for stiff work. It is sometimes overlooked that everything, or nearly everything, which is carried to camp down a precipitous slope, or across an awkward ford, must some day be carried back again.

Next comes the question of supplies. Here there are two points. It is a great convenience, almost a necessity, to have a farmhouse close at hand. This will usually happen, because it is the farmer who gives leave to camp. The farmhouse will supply milk, butter, and eggs, and probably vegetables. If these elementary necessities are within easy reach, camp routine will run smoothly; but it may be otherwise if some one has to be sent two miles before breakfast and supper for the milk. Moreover, the farmer is pretty sure to take a hospitable and good-humoured interest in the camp, and he can help in other ways. His cart or trap may be the





BRINGING EQUIPMENT TO THE SITE. THE FARMER'S SLEDGE.

*To face p. 44.*



only means of conveyance to and from the station, and he may be willing occasionally to bring out the heavier supplies when he returns from market. A farm, too, has attractions of its own, and to be near it will not mar our sense of seclusion. Let the farm, then, be close at hand.

The farm, however, cannot supply everything. Before we finally decide upon a site we must be clear where and how we are going to obtain bread, meat, oatmeal, cheese, jam, sugar, paraffin, and all those supplies which require frequent replenishing. It is astounding how great a weight of such things a party of six will consume in a week. It will be unwise, therefore, to be too far from a village shop, or to be obliged to carry heavy loads up a long and fatiguing ascent. Whatever the weather, some one will have to make the journey at least once or twice a week and bring back a burden of many pounds weight. If we can fetch and carry by boat, the problem is simplified. A light trek-cart can also be most useful. As a rule, how-

ever, we shall be dependent on the bicycle. It will be well, then, that we should not be more than two miles away from the indispensable shops and from the post, and that they should be accessible by a decent road. It adds greatly to the labour of a cycle errand if the last mile crosses rough ground, and if several dilapidated gates have to be carefully opened and closed on the way. All these cautions can be set aside if we please; but in that case we ought to be able to rely upon special facilities of some kind, or we must be prepared to spend much time and labour in fetching and carrying.

We can now pass from questions of locality and general position to the character of the site itself. First in importance is the water supply. We shall not only cause ourselves much trouble, but we shall lose one of the charms of camp life, if we fail to pitch our tents quite close to clear and running water. We need this flowing water in abundance for cleansing purposes, including the early morning bath. A

stream belongs to the camp picture; it is beautiful in itself, and it is a living source of interest and pleasure. The ordinary brook or burn, however, is likely to be suspect for drinking purposes. Somewhere above us there will probably be dwellings or cattle-sheds. It may be that close to our site a runnel comes leaping down the bare hillside, and such water we can safely drink. Sometimes we may be lucky enough to find a spring. Here is a note from a Welsh camp:

“Since lunch I have been up the track to a spring I had noted. I don't like drinking the river water. No one who lives hereabouts does; and only this morning I passed a dead sheep on the bank. The spring is not far away; it issues from the very rock, in a little fern-clad cave. The water is icy cold and purity itself. I cleared it out, and got my hands well numbed in doing so.”

It will sometimes happen that the best plan is to fetch drinking water from the farm.

The supply of fuel must be considered if we intend to use a fire. There are

uplands and stretches of coast where there is hardly a tree or a hedge. Shade from the sun is desirable in the hot months, especially in the lowlands. If we are camping high up in the hills, we shall need it less. "Midsummer down on the level country makes us shade-lovers; here where the air is more elastic we can rejoice to be in a shadeless land."<sup>1</sup> Dryness of site, including security from the risk of floods, and shelter from the weather, are conditions of such capital importance that a chapter will be devoted to each of them. Something will also be said about the importance of securing a site which is not exposed to the attentions of cattle.

These, then, are the points to which we must attend in choosing a camp site for a long stay. It is only when we are satisfied about these essentials that we can allow ourselves to be influenced by the charms of situation, or by secondary attractions. If we are too far away from supplies, our freedom will be curtailed; and nothing can

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Hudson, *Nature in Downland*.

compensate us for a wet pitch, or for scarcity of water, or for lack of shelter in high winds. Happily, it is possible with a little trouble to find everything we want in beautiful surroundings not too far removed from the sources of supply.

## IV

### THE CAMPER'S WELCOME AND HIS RESPONSE

“If we cannot ourselves be in direct touch with the hardness and liveness of rudimentary things, it at least remains to us to seek intercourse with those to whom such actual contact is the touchstone of reality.”

—R. A. SCOTT-JAMES<sup>1</sup>.

“The shepherd talked, as only such a man can, of many things, of fishing and shooting, of the hills, of the people of the place, of old-world times. His racy speech, so accurate and expressive, seemed wonderful to one accustomed to the inanity of civilized talk.”—JOHN BUCHAN.<sup>2</sup>

IT is one of the merits of angling, cycling, and camping, and doubtless of other outdoor sports and recreations, that they bring us into friendly contact with original and entertaining characters. Izaak Walton has told us that anglers are quiet men and followers of peace, and it is also true that they are charitably disposed. Those are often pleasant conversations which take

<sup>1</sup> *An Englishman in Ireland.*

<sup>2</sup> *Scholar Gipsies.*



place between anglers on the river bank ; a common interest overcomes reserve and any differences of worldly station. Boat-builders and farmers follow callings nearly as ancient and respectable as Shakespeare's gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers ; callings which evoke all the skill and character a man possesses. In some of these men wisdom and humour are ingrained : they see life from a sure angle of their own ; and their personalities and sayings take root in the memory. It is one of the troubles about conventional education that it can equip a man with intellectual accomplishments without endowing him with sense and character. Compared with the untutored man who labours with hands as well as wits, and spends his days in wrestling mostly in silence with nature and her materials, the man of books and academies may have the nimbler brain, the wider knowledge, the readier tongue, and the longer reach of mind ; but he has not always as strong or definite a personality, or as sure a grip of the lessons of life. It

is, therefore, not the least merit of camping that it brings us into company with farmers, shepherds, blacksmiths, country postmen, carpenters, ferrymen, coastguards, keepers, and fishermen.

Except in remote and unenclosed country, the camper is usually dependent on the farmer for permission to camp. He has no reason to doubt his reception, if he chooses the right kind of locality. "You can camp there for the rest of your life if you like," was the answer of a burly Cornish farmer, when I asked leave to pitch a tent on a bit of coast belonging to him. He had never seen or heard of me before, as I stood upon his threshold accompanied by my wife, a big dog, and a cart piled with luggage. Then and there he went with me to help to choose a site, and for some hours toiled like a giant in carrying our goods down a steep hillside.

That happened more than twenty years ago; and it can be taken as typical. Another Cornish farmer, at whose house I arrived with six companions, rose from the

chimney corner, looked us over, said little, and led the way to a delightful cove, where he helped us to pitch our tents. Elsewhere in England, and also in Wales, I have often met with a like readiness and kindness. The Welsh farmers of the hills are particularly hospitable. I recall a patriarch who had hardly a dozen words of English, and whose wife and daughter had but little more. This difficulty of speech, however, did not hinder a generous kindness which added much to the pleasure of our stay. On another occasion, a young Welsh farmer, a complete stranger to us, received us with great cordiality, and showed us an excellent site.

“I asked for tea; and the old lady, his mother, gave us a capital tea in the cleanest of little kitchens. Nothing could exceed the kindness and readiness of these people. The Welsh are nearly always eager to befriend strangers, and seem to understand at once why one wants to spend a holiday camping.”

I have only very rarely met with any difficulty in obtaining the desired permission,

and I have received friendly services without end. I may add that I have never known the dwellers in the farmhouse to be intrusive.

Nevertheless, permission should always be asked, unless the camper is passing through open moors far from habitations. In this land of cultivation and ownership we are not entitled to camp where we please;<sup>1</sup> and we are bound to recognize that we are asking a favour. Make the request politely, do no damage, respond to any courtesy, and all is likely to be well. Payment must depend on circumstances, such as the locality, the position of the farmer, the length of stay, and the number of the party. In some cases, rent will be expected, and often it will be well to mention it at the outset. As a rule, payment will not be refused. Occasionally there will be instances in which the offer of money would be tactless. In the same

<sup>1</sup> See the interesting article on "The Legal Aspect of Camping" in the *Handbook of Light-Weight Camping* (Camping Club of G. B. & I.).

way, the camper's purchases of milk, butter, eggs, and vegetables at the farm are sometimes welcomed by the farmer (or his wife), and sometimes such sales are regarded rather as a concession. There are farms and farms.

Experience points to a moral. The further the camper goes from towns, large villages, main roads, highly-cultivated districts, and what in general we call "civilization," the more genial and ready will be his welcome. If you wish to be really free and at home, go to remote places, whether by the sea or among the hills. Avoid all domains with park fences, lodge gates, "grounds," and game preserves, unless the owner is well known to you and sympathetic towards your vagaries. In this atmosphere and region the camper and his ways are apt to be coldly regarded. "These things are not done." The very first time I took out a tent I had the temerity to apply for permission at a smart country house near Winchester. The interview was decorous, but I caused it to be

short. I saw where I had fallen, and I never forgot my error. I believe I was taken for an impostor, with designs on trout and pheasants, or perhaps the butler's pantry.

Let the camper also give a wide berth, if he can, to prosperous districts of large farms with enclosures in every direction, and a general appearance of prosaic agriculture. I once had a trying experience in a Welsh lowland of this character. We had come down from the hills with a trek-cart, and this was the third of three long treks on successive days :

"The country we were in now was all enclosed, mostly dairy farms; the fields full of cattle, a milk factory close by, and a country house or two. We went on a mile or more to where I had thought of stopping, but nothing offered. Rain began to fall. The boys were very plucky, but we were all tired. I called a halt, and we had biscuits and finished the tea-flasks. Then we went on. Luckily the road, though gently rising, was good, and we made good progress. I asked at one house, and was well received, but the man had no land of his own. He said there were farm-houses a mile or so beyond.

So we went on. At last we came to a farm. I went in and asked leave to camp. There was a colloquy within, and an old woman came out and grumbled. I told her we were tired and anxious to pitch the tents before the weather grew worse. But she remained inhospitable; so I turned and left her. This is the second, and only the second, time in my long experience that I have had difficulty in getting leave. Back we went rather angrily to the cart, and on again. Soon another farm offered, rather superior; but I was now determined to bring this over-long march to an end. I went in, and the farmer's wife referred me not too cordially to her husband, who was in the orchard. I found him civil, but not effusive. He offered us the choice of a grass field and a stubble field. We found a very fair pitch in the corner of the latter."

We must bear in mind that, to a farmer in a prosaic district, camping may seem hardly respectable, even suspect. The very last kind of holiday which he would desire for himself would be one spent in tents. Gipsies live in tents; and his opinion of gipsies is emphatic. Moreover, we are strangers to him. He does not know how long we shall stay, or what we shall be

doing. We may set fire to things. His fields are full of cattle. If he gives leave to us, other people may want to camp too. In short, our arrival instead of being an agreeable surprise is a perplexity, even a nuisance. It is, therefore, not strange that his reception of us should be cool. The mistake is really our own. Unless we are sure of our man and our ground, we should confine our camping ventures to a different type of country.

The camper is a guest. Though he may pay something for his privileges, they are still privileges. His footing is not that of a person staying at an inn. He owes much to those who make him, a stranger, welcome within their gates, and give him freedoms of various kinds. Apart from little acts of courtesy, which it is often in his power to render, the camper does well to bear in mind one or two simple obligations. He will, of course, be careful to do no damage; he will treat fences and crops tenderly; he will not needlessly cut or injure the turf round the tents; he will not plunder hedges



and fences for firewood, nor light fires in dangerous places. He will ask leave before fishing in the river. He will scrupulously shut all gates behind him; a duty not as simple as it may seem when, as often happens, a crazy obstruction balanced over a puddle passes muster as a gate. The camper will not allow litter to accumulate around his tents. He will burn or bury refuse and waste paper, and when he goes he will leave a clean site. Finally, the camper, as becomes a guest, will respect the susceptibilities of his host. He will not fish or boat on Sundays, if local feeling is against it. In some parts of Wales, views about Sunday observance are strong, and the behaviour of a certain type of tourist is resented. We may think as we please about such matters, but we can at least be careful not to annoy our kindly host, and perhaps bring him into disfavour with his neighbours.

## V

# TENTS

“A little tent and a big fire make a good man.”—GIPSY PROVERB.

“I was a great solitary when I was young. . . . I travelled . . . with a tilt cart, a tent, and a cooking stove, tramping all day beside the waggon, and at night, whenever it was possible, gipsying in a cove of the hills, or by the side of a wood. I believe I visited in this manner most of the wild and desolate regions both in England and Scotland. . . . It was a life in which I delighted ; and I fully thought to have grown old upon the march, and at last died in a ditch.”—R. L. STEVENSON.<sup>1</sup>

“The tent-maker who would make a good tent ought to live in a tent in a storm to acquire experience.”—J. MACGREGOR (“Rob Roy”).<sup>2</sup>

It is not the purpose of this chapter to enumerate and describe the chief varieties of the tent ordinary. This has already been done in several books, and more recent information can always be obtained from makers' catalogues. The aim here is rather to determine the qualities which a good

<sup>1</sup> *The Pavilion on the Links.*      <sup>2</sup> *The Rob Roy on the Jordan.*

tent should possess, having regard to the purposes for which it is intended ; and, as a result of this consideration, to encourage the camper to design and make his tents for himself. Of this designing and making of tents there is, indeed, no end. The work is fascinating in itself, and the perfect tent is always an ideal. However ingeniously we adapt our means to our end, we shall always see after trial how improvement could be made.

The sovereign qualities of a good tent are (1) strength, (2) lightness, (3) simplicity, (4) stability and weatherliness, (5) roominess. These five qualities are closely related : they merge into one another, and the tent-maker's business is to blend them in such proportions that the result shall be apt for the particular purpose in view.

The purpose in view will be settled mainly by (1) the kind of camping, and (2) the kind of country in which the tent is to be used. The quality of lightness, for example, always important, will be cultivated in an ascending scale by the

boat-camper, the trek-cart camper, the cycle-camper, and the camper who goes afoot. The last two, in particular, will accept a minimum of interior space, and a narrow margin of strength, if thereby they can secure the lightness and compactness they desire. On the other hand, for a stationary camp we may reasonably ask for tents of stouter fabric and larger size. Much again will depend on the degree of exposure to which the tent is to be subjected. Many a tent which might do very well in lowland coverts would fail to survive a mountain storm, or the assault of wind on a bare down or open shore. Such points as these must be weighed before we buy our tent, or set about making one for ourselves.

Many varieties of tent, both heavy and light, are in the market. Very light tents are mostly small, and are usually meant for cyclists. They are often ingenious and pretty, and they are serviceable within limits which will be discussed below. The chief types of heavy tent—such as the

Ridge, Emigrant, Patrol, Bell, Whymper, and Dome — are well-known. Of the Army bell tent, Galton says compendiously: "It is difficult to pitch; it requires many tent-pegs; it has ropes radiating all round it, over which men and horses stumble; and it is incommodious and ugly."<sup>1</sup> The Dome, a circular tent without a central pole, though rather difficult to pitch, and not free from defects, is one of the roomiest and most weatherly of modern types. The camper who requires a stout tent with an area of more than, say, 50 square feet, and who hesitates to undertake the lengthy task of making it himself, will do well to buy either a Dome, or a tent of the ridge type from a maker of repute. When several persons are camping together, one of the tents should be large enough to serve as mess-tent, store-tent, and general headquarters.

Some experience is necessary before a camper can be quite sure that a particular tent will satisfy his requirements. The

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Travel*, p. 154.

tent which looks so attractive when set up in the warehouse, or upon the lawn, or when pictured in the catalogue, may prove disappointing upon trial. It may be tiresome to erect, or unsatisfactory under wind; it may admit wet at door, ventilator, window, or elsewhere; or in an unforeseen respect it may leave something to be desired. It is after experiences of this sort, and when he has learned exactly what he wants his tent to do for him, that the camper is impelled to think out his own designs, and either to execute them himself, or to get someone to do so for him. Let us, then, revert to the qualities, five in number, which have been mentioned as desirable in all tents.

(i) *Strength*, and (ii) *Lightness*.

Of recent years, the cult of lightness has made great headway, chiefly in response to the needs of the cycle-camper. Perhaps the pioneer of light-weight tents was Mr G. R. Lowndes, who, in 1890, wrote a masterly little book called *Gipsy Tents*,

*and How to Use Them.* No book that I know of has so much in it of the true spirit of camping sportsmanship. Mr Lowndes had studied the little wigwams made of bent rods and blankets commonly used by gipsies. He argued that the persistence of this type of tent was the outcome of evolution, and must imply qualities of value. In particular, he pointed to the fact that the Gipsy tent consists of two parts, the inner or sleeping tent about 6 feet square with a rounded end, and the outer tent, or baulk, in which stores, etc., can be kept and a fire lighted.<sup>1</sup> Mr Lowndes then showed how the rude original could be improved without impairing its essential qualities. He replaced the roughly shaped rods by strips of American elm steamed to correct curves, and bolted together by screws and nuts. For the motley coverings, pinned together

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Galton, who speaks of the framework as "an excellent contrivance." (*Art of Travel*, p. 161.) Also, Lord and Baines, who say of the Gipsy tent: "Its mode of arrangement is both ingenious and thoroughly practical." (*Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life*, p. 49.)

by thorns, he substituted a single covering of red blanket properly fitted. The baulk was improved similarly, and so devised that it could be used with one, two, or even three tents. Many other ingenious devices were suggested. Mr Lowndes claimed that the Gipsy tent needed no guy ropes, and was thus free from the chief worry and complication of the tent ordinary.

All my early tents were made after this manner. I can endorse nearly everything that Mr Lowndes says in praise of his Gipsy tent. The low elevation, the roominess within, the provision of an outer tent for storage, the freedom from guy ropes, the two doors, and the ease with which the door in use can be shifted to the other side in accordance with the weather, are all excellent features. Good blanket resists rain well, and is the quietest of fabrics in wind. Outwardly, red blanket quickly fades to an unobtrusive tawny brown, while the inside of the tent always looks cosy, particularly when lighted up at night. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the framework of rods,



straight and curved, is both bulky and awkward to pack. Blanket, though fairly light, is also bulky. The stability of these tents in strong winds is not assured unless extra precautions are taken. My tents would have been blown away on more than one occasion had I not held them down by ropes and pegs. To keep a fire burning on the baulk floor without admitting an excess of smoke into the tent itself is, I found, difficult. No doubt it can be done. Witness this note from an old Cornish log-book :

“Then I drew water, cut wood, brought in the fire-basket, and all necessaries, fastened down the door, and cooked our dinner within doors. Outside, a howling tempest : inside, snugness, warmth, and good victuals. The fire burned splendidly, cooking well with little fuel and little smoke, and warming and cheering the whole tent.” But not all our adventures with the fire were as happy.

After abandoning the Gipsy type of tent for a long time, and trying many others, I still think that for certain purposes, for example, for use in a stationary camp, the Gipsy tent, notwithstanding these short-

comings, cannot be surpassed. I am convinced that the principles upon which it is designed are sound; that its defects are not radical, and that they could be corrected with a little ingenuity.

A Gipsy tent, such as Mr Lowndes advocated, would be much too bulky and heavy for a cycle-camper. More recently, therefore, Mr T. H. Holding and others have designed tents and appurtenances of an almost incredible lightness. These "phantom kits" are extremely interesting, and no camper can fail to learn much from Mr Holding's thorough treatment of the subject and his many clever notions. The progress thus made has caused cycle-camping to become both practicable and popular. The reader who is specially interested in the problems of light-weight camping should consult the books by Mr Holding and Mr Wood, and, in particular, the *Handbook of Light-Weight Camping*, published by the Council of the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

The cult of lightness, however, can easily be overdone. It is absurd to suppose that these pretty little tents with their gossamer coverings, slender poles, thread-like guys, and tiny pegs will withstand the roughest kind of weather. They are far more efficient than might be supposed, and under certain conditions they are admirable; but after trying several of the recommended fabrics—lawn, assouan, swallow-wing—I have not found one which will keep out continuous rain driven by hard wind.<sup>1</sup> It is not enough to keep out rain, even heavy rain, unaccompanied by wind: the real test is wind and rain together. A fly-sheet is a help, but there is still the risk of the whole concern being blown away or torn. It may be said that weather of this severity is unusual, and that such mishaps are unlikely, or that if they occur it matters little. I do not agree. A good tent is a tent in which confidence can be

<sup>1</sup> *Cp. Handbook of Light-Weight Camping* (1920): "Spraying due to very heavy rain is not entirely absent with any material used so far," p. 20.

placed: it should be perfectly dry, whatever the weather, and it should be equal to all tests. And I believe that no such tent can be produced unless we employ materials of a strength considerably greater than that recommended by light-weight experts.<sup>1</sup>

A few experiences may be of interest. Not long ago I bought for use when cycle-camping a tent called, I know not why, the "Gipsy." In area it is about 6 feet by 5, and it is 5 feet high or a little more. It is supported by two poles, one at each end. Across each pole comes a thin bamboo spreader, which widens the upper part of the tent. The canvas is "swallow-wing"; light, smooth, and close in texture. It is not the lightest kind of material. The tent

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, p. 22. "When one is busy with an equipment of this kind, one begins instinctively to estimate the value of a thing entirely with reference to its lightness, and even if the article in question be nothing but a pocket-knife, the same consideration holds good. But care must be taken, nevertheless, not to go too far in the direction of lightness, for all the implements must be strong, since they will have to stand many a severe test." Camping in Greenland and camping in Britain are, of course, very different; but Nansen's moral applies to both.

itself is neatly made ; it opens at either end. The skirting pegs down all round with aluminium pegs or skewers. When I bought it, the tent was fitted with two bamboo poles, not very well jointed. Each pole had one flimsy guy. I discarded these guys at once, and replaced each of them by three stronger ones. It was obvious that unless each pole was held by lateral guys as well as by guys in line with the tent lengthwise, there could be no adequate stability under side-strain. One April day I took the tent, thus strengthened, for its first trial. This is what happened :

“About 11 the wind got up, and blew furiously. It was impossible to sleep, sheltered though we were. Without the extra guys, I don't think the tent would have stood long. . . . About 1 a stormy gale set in, compared to which the earlier blasts had been child's play. The gusts were savage. Some of the wind took us end on, where we had little protection. . . . About 3, the gale was so bad that I took one of the fishing rods, which was in its case, and lashed it to the infirm pole. The pole could not go now without smashing the thick ends of

the greenheart rod. Soon after, there came some gusts so violent that I was driven to buttress the pole by putting my foot halfway up it, while lying on my back, and so staying for about twenty minutes until this spasm was over. The buffets of the wind were just as if someone was charging heavily against the pole. The tent shook and flapped and groaned, but thus supported it stood."

The infirm poles went the way of the flimsy guys, and were replaced by single-piece ash poles, about the same thickness, a little heavier, and much more trustworthy. In the following summer a friend and myself took this tent and another into South Wales. The second tent was made to my own design. It was very small. Four thin ash rods leaning inwards from the corners of a square were joined, opposite to opposite, by two short, curved rods which crossed one another in the centre. The covering was swallow-wing canvas. The skirting pegged down in a circle or oval, and in quiet weather no guys were needed. Four guys, however, were attached to a sort of storm-cap which could be fitted over the

top of the tent. The tent was meant for one person only.

Our aim was to reach the eastern llyn on Carmarthen Van. We carried our kit on our cycles. When nearing the llyn towards evening, and at a height not far short of 2,000 feet, we were caught by a south-wester. We were held up for two nights in a gully, where we were lucky enough to find a fairly sheltered if not particularly dry pitch. The bad weather lasted for thirty-six hours. This is the entry on the first morning:

“It rained all night. I slept very well and was warm and snug. I woke finally about 7. It was then raining tremendously, and driving with wind. To my great annoyance the attack proved too much for my canvas, which began to drop water. There was some excuse, for the rain simply battered on the tent. The little stream outside was swollen to a noisy torrent.”

Thereupon I rigged the storm-cap, and covered the exposed part of the tent with a thin mackintosh sheet, brought to protect the bicycles. Meanwhile, the other tent, the

Gipsy, had kept fairly dry. The weather, however, grew worse :

“6 p.m. From about 12 to 2 the gale was very violent. The tents stood well, but the buffets were startling. I went out and rigged several extra guys to the poles of the Gipsy, including one taking the rear or windward pole about its middle. I pegged these guys, and weighted the pegs with heavy stones. I also weighted the skirting and the other pegs of both tents, and—[I had written thus much when a tremendous squall struck the tents. Mine stood all right. I heard a crack, and also a cry from X. I went out, and the whole of the left side of the Gipsy had been blown away from its fastenings: pegs were wrenched up, and one loop smashed. The door pole was bending dangerously, and the whole tent was in a racket. I got a lot more stones, and weighted the skirting still further. The pole still bent in the squalls: so I put a strong guy from the middle of it and took it straight outwards in front of the tent, and another guy to the right hand. I also carried a line through the tent from pole to pole. This steadied it].”

Next day I wrote :

“Last night the weather was very ugly. Rain came on again, and the wind stiffened.



We decided that X. should come into my tent. Whether his tent would outlive the night was doubtful. No one would believe that my little tent would hold two; but it did, and we were fairly comfortable. I took his groundsheet and lashed it over the unprotected side of my tent. So we had nothing to fear from the rain, which was plentiful. The gale now took the form of fierce squalls, and began to veer to the west or even north-west. The little tent stood gamely, but I often had to grip the rods lest they should go. . . . At 8, when I finally woke, there was the promise of a fine day."

The Gipsy also weathered the night; but the canvas of both tents failed to keep out the rain in the hardest squalls, unless fortified by mackintosh.

This experience on Carmarthen Van convinced me finally that though a very light tent of the Gipsy type may do well enough in sheltered places and in moderate weather, it cannot be expected to stand severe exposure. Such exposure demands a tent low in elevation and sturdy in all its materials. This Gipsy tent has now been further amended by giving it a linen fly-sheet and stouter poles. Thus strengthened it has

rendered good service ; but it has become much too heavy to be carried on a bicycle.

The verdict upon lightness is, therefore, this. If the camper requires a tent for cycle-camping, or pedestrian-camping, by all means let him study lightness. Every ounce matters. But let him study no less the strength of materials. If he means to camp on the heights or in exposed places, tent, poles, guys, and pegs must be stronger, and therefore heavier, accordingly. The tent may weigh 4 lbs. or more : the poles also will be heavier ; but the extra strength will free him from anxiety and simplify the choice of a pitch. The tent should be as low as possible, for thus it will catch the wind less, and shelter will be more easily found for it. In our adventure on Carmarthen Van it was the little tent which stood the weather best.

(iii) *Simplicity.*

A main test of simplicity is ease of erection. The camper must bear in mind that sooner or later he will be called upon to pitch his

tents in waning daylight, or in a down-pour, or in a high wind, or when he is tired. It is then that he will grow impatient if the process is other than straightforward and speedy.

Complications and devices which require humouring and minute adjustment, especially in wet weather, should therefore be avoided. If the work is hurried and bungled, the tent will be ill pitched; and an ill-pitched tent is neither weatherly nor sightly. No less to be shunned are tents, like the army bell tent, which are cursed with a multiplicity of guys and pegs, and will not set properly unless every peg and guy is correctly sited and tautened. Simplicity also depends not a little upon a tent's shape. The plainer the shape, the more evenly the canvas will set, and the more weatherly the tent will be. Among my experiments have been two small cycle tents of rather eccentric design. It seemed to me, that if I had headroom and space in which to sit up in one part of the tent, and length enough to lie down, the rest of the dimensions might

be curtailed. Accordingly, I produced this design :



The idea may be sound enough ; but I found, first, that light fabrics, for reasons not very clear to the lay mind, do not like irregular shapes ; they have a tendency to “draw” or “take up” when the pieces are being sewn together. Secondly, owing to its peculiar shape, it was not easy to get a taut roof without using an excessive number of guys and pegs. Nothing was gained by departure from the more orthodox models.

Another experiment was a small square tent. At each corner was a short upright pole, and from these corner poles rods of convex shape extended to a central boss to which they were attached. This tent was exceptionally stable and roomy, and it also looked well. But it took more than half an hour of fidgetty work to set it up, and it has therefore passed out of use.

I regard the Whymper tent, with crossed poles at each end, as the simplest and best form for tents not exceeding 7 feet square. Further reference to this type will be made below.

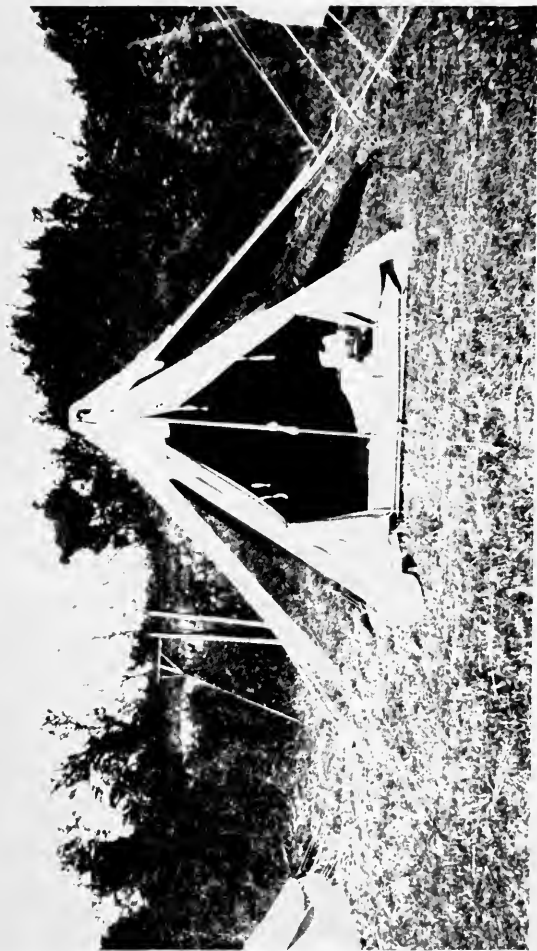
(iv) *Stability and Weatherliness.*

A tent is supported in three ways: (1) by poles; (2) by guys and pegs; (3) by pegs along the skirting. The effect of these agencies is, or should be, to enlist the strength of the fabric itself in maintaining stability. But mere stability is not enough. The problem of tent-designing is how to secure a right balance of several qualities for a purpose in view. Not only is stability at the price of undue weight prohibited, but stability and weatherliness, though closely related, are not identical. For example, tents shaped like a pyramid or a dome are exceptionally stable; but both these types, owing to their shape, are bound to have unweatherly doors. To secure a dry entrance to a tent, either the door must be perpendicular, as in a ridge tent; or

there must be two doors, as in the true Gipsy tent, the door on the weather side being kept closed. Similarly, a tent should be low in order to escape the wind. Yet if it is too low, it is uncomfortable; and if the pitch of the roof is too gradual, it may not shoot off the water quickly enough. "The power of a tent to keep out rain depends more on the 'pitch' of its sides and roof than anything else"<sup>1</sup> Such are some of the perplexities of the tent-designer.

Tents with a single pole are usually faulty. The pole is likely to be heavy, and if it is in the centre it is a nuisance. Probably many pegs and guys will be needed: and the door will almost certainly be on a slope. Tents with a pole at each end can have perpendicular doors; but unless the tent is large, the pole at the entrance is an obstruction. J. Edgington's Dome tents, which are upheld not by a central pole, but by eight bent ribs radiating from a socketed boss, have many merits. Their chief defect is the door,

<sup>1</sup> Lord and Baines, *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life*, p. 49.



A WHIMPER TENT.

*To face p. 80.*





which is on a slope. It is difficult to keep dry the segment of the floor at the entrance, and there seems no remedy except to carry materials for a projecting porch.

The most satisfactory types of tent known to me are the true Gipsy, to which reference has already been made, and the Whymper. The Gipsy tent, however, is not suitable for every kind of purpose, and answers best if made fairly large. The Whymper principle, on the other hand, is peculiarly suitable for tents of small size.

The Whymper tent proper is A-shaped, has an area of 7 feet square, and a height of about 5 feet 6 inches. The groundsheet is sewn to the walls and end. Though the inclusion of the groundsheet shuts out draughts and insects, it is open to objection, since it makes the fabric less easy to fold up, and it prevents the walls (*i.e.* the roof) of the tent from being fully stretched out. To stop the walls from sagging inwards, parrel lines are fitted; but this device seldom works well, and sometimes causes a drip. The constructional

principle, which, in my opinion, gives these tents their outstanding merit, is that of the crossed poles at each end. In the orthodox Whymper, these poles are thrust upwards through canvas sockets. Their ends project and cross. A rope, which is sewn along the ridge of the tent, is twisted round these ends and made fast, fore and aft, to a stout peg. No other guys are required; and only two or three more pegs, and these of small size. If a fly-sheet is used, the method of fixing it is simple. The crossed poles receive the ridge pole at each end of the tent. The fly is thrown over, and its guys made fast to pegs.

This tent has conspicuous excellences. It is perhaps the easiest of all tents to pitch. There is nothing to go wrong. The thing is, in fact, fool-proof. Only two guys are required, and of these one can be slackened without leaving the tent: no small boon on a dirty night. The crossed poles, which, of course, lie along the two sides of the A, give an entrance clear of all obstruction. They also enable a ridge pole and fly-sheet

to be fitted with the maximum of ease. The walls are steep, thus making the tent weatherly under rain, and also lessening wastage of interior space. Finally, tents built on the Whymper principle, with crossed poles, are remarkably stable. Their only disadvantage is that four poles are required instead of two. On the other hand, the four poles will not weigh twice as much as the two.

A well-made little tent of this pattern, but with a loose groundsheet, stands like a house. Poles, guys, fabric, and pegs all work amiably together to produce stability. One Easter I camped in Cardiganshire at a height of 1,000 feet. Some hundreds of feet above us was a llyn, to which we used to go to fish. The weather was very wintry, and we therefore pitched by the shore of the llyn a sturdy little tent of the Whymper type as a shelter for meals.<sup>1</sup> The spot was entirely exposed; the ground boggy and uneven. For a fortnight this little tent stood up to every kind of rough

<sup>1</sup> This tent is shown (with a fly) in the frontispiece.

weather. Once we found it half buried in drifted snow, but still erect. Weather did not seem to affect it in the least. After this test, among others, I feel justified in putting confidence in tents built on this principle. If there is a sturdier type, I have yet to meet with it.

(v) *Roominess.*

Tents of bee-hive or dome shape doubtless afford the maximum of head-room and interior space. Rectangular floors, however, are perhaps the most convenient for beds. In designing a tent, care should be taken that the highest part is really useful. Much of the upper part of a bell tent, for example, serves no purpose of accommodation. Interior height should be determined by three factors: (1) the requirements of proportion and construction; (2) the desirability of keeping the elevation low; and (3) the height needed for sitting upright. Thus, in a Dome tent with a diameter of about 10 feet, the height of 6 feet in the middle is not provided in order to give us

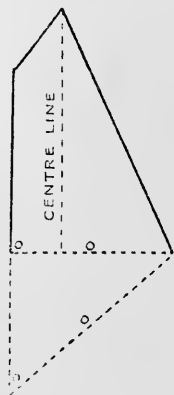
the luxury of being able to stand upright, but because it is a condition of proportion and construction. It is not necessary to be able to stand upright in any tent. The indispensable minimum required is height enough to enable the camper to sit up comfortably. This means that no tent should be lower than 3 feet 6 inches or 3 feet 9 inches in its highest part. A tent with a wedge-shaped roof should be somewhat higher.

Professional tent-makers seem to assume that people want tents only for sleeping in. But the truth is that we want them not only as bedrooms but as living rooms. Unless we are moving quickly with the lightest of kits, we require, when camping, some place of shelter where we can cook, and keep our pots and pans, oilskins, towels, wet boots, fishing gear, and all those miscellaneous articles which for one reason or another are not welcomed inside the tent itself. A separate tent for these purposes can be very useful, but in wet weather it is preferable to have

everything you want within reach and under cover. The need for some kind of porch or outer tent invariably makes itself felt whenever we camp in one place for any length of time ; and it is in this respect that the Gipsy tent with its baulk is so clearly the superior in design of every other variety.

In light-weight cycle tents of the ridge pattern, it is an excellent plan so to make the tent doors that they can be pegged right out, in line with the tent, or at an angle to its length, thus securing a certain degree of protection to the threshold. Instead, that is to say, of cutting the tent door just big enough to fill one-half of the opening and also overlap its fellow, let it be cut thus :

The portion within dotted lines will enable the door to be extended so as to form a side screen, under cover of which cooking and other things can be done. Another plan is to project the



ridge pole two or three feet beyond the front of the tent, and extend the fly-sheet over it. In this case, however, the fly-sheet should reach as nearly as possible to the ground on either side.

*Note on Materials for Tents.*

For materials for light-weight tents, the amateur tent-maker cannot do better than consult the *Handbook of the Camping Club* and the books by Mr Holding and Mr Wood. (See Appendix.)

As regards fabrics of heavier quality, there are many kinds to be had. The best fabric known to me for making tents of medium size and weight is J. Edgington's "water-repellent, khaki-dyed canvas." It gives me pleasure to commend this material after putting it to severe tests for many years. It is strong, hard wearing, yet not unduly heavy. It is soft to the touch, close in texture, and warm in cold weather. Its power of resisting wet is marvellous. In the heaviest driving rain, I have never known a drop penetrate it, nor have I ever perceived the fine spray which many fabrics admit under such conditions. The interior surface of the canvas is always dry, and can be touched with impunity. I used a tent made of this material during the August of 1917 when, in South Wales, storm succeeded storm with

scarcely any intermission, day or night (see p. 249). The same tent in 1919—to take another instance out of many—weathered twenty-four hours of tremendous rain driven with great force by a north-east gale. The noise of this deluge, as it struck the roof, almost drowned conversation. On all such occasions this tent, and others made of the same material, remained absolutely dry. I know of no other canvas of which as much can be said. A tent made of this khaki-drill has no need of a fly-sheet as an aid against wet. The colour of the stuff is an inconspicuous brown which fades to a rather lighter hue. The final colour is earthy or sandy, and it harmonizes well with the surroundings. Inside the light is subdued, but cheerful.



## VI

# SHELTER

“Ac venti velut agmine facto,  
qua data porta, ruunt et terras turbine perfiant.  
Incubuerunt mari, totumque a sedibus imis  
una Eurusque Notusque ruunt creberque procellis  
Africus, et vastos volvunt ad litora fluctus.”

—VIRGIL.

“To be free of the weather, to let it rain if it wants to, to lie and listen to it, these are all thrilling pleasures.”—H. HESKETH PRICHARD.<sup>1</sup>

“Better days than those spent in roughest weather on the hills I could not well have known.”—W. H. HUDSON.<sup>2</sup>

“And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew.”—TENNYSON.

“’Tis the hard grey weather  
Breeds hard English men.”

—KINGSLEY.

I CANNOT remember that in my early camps we ever gave a thought to shelter. Year after year we pitched our tents on a strip of turf close to the western ocean, and open to

<sup>1</sup> *Through the Heart of Patagonia.*

<sup>2</sup> *Nature in Downland.*

all the winds of heaven. Those Augusts must have been singularly benevolent, for we were not blown away. I believe, however, that subsequently those who carried on these camps were forced by stress of weather to seek protection higher up the valley.

Careless youth does as it wills; but heads of households have given hostages to fortune. Moreover, experience soon weans the camper from his unwariness, and teaches him the value of shelter. Too much wind, by day or by night, is always harassing. It is wretched to be kept awake by the flapping of canvas, and to lie uneasily wondering how much longer your tents will stand the racket. An exposed position is also much colder than a sheltered one. It makes all the difference if in rough weather a buffer or screen is interposed between the tents and the assault of the elements. As I write these lines a boisterous westerly wind, bringing torrents of rain, is blowing; but between my tents and the wind is a field wall of stone and earth, surmounted by a

hedge. The wind rages, but the tents are quiet, and they escape much of the driving rain. In choosing a site, therefore, particularly for a long stay, let us pay heed to this point of shelter. Whatever the merits of the site in other respects, it should be rejected if it fails in this; unless we mean to stay for one night only, and the weather is plainly set fair.

What sort of shelter are we to seek? It will be obvious, in the first place, that we cannot have shelter on every side, unless we pitch the tents on a small clearing in the midst of a wood or thickets. Such a site is excellent, provided the tents are clear of the trees. Ground which is overhung by trees is always damper and colder than ground in the open, owing to the drip from the branches and the loss of sunshine. Whatever the season of the year, the full power of the sun is always beneficial to an encampment in these islands. If shade is desired, let it suffice if it can be found a little distance away.

Usually, however, we cannot have shelter

on all sides. We must, therefore, consider from which quarter rough weather is likely to come. This will depend on the season of the year, the region generally, and the immediate locality. In a deep and curving valley, for instance, the wind is rarely true; it tends to blow up or down with occasional cross squalls. On the western side of these islands, the heaviest weather comes off the Atlantic, and of this fact the warping of hedges and trees all along the coast and far inland is sufficient warning. At Easter, hard winds, often bringing snow, may come from the north and east: Kingsley's

“black North-easter,  
Through the snowstorm hurled.”

In a summer camp, therefore, let the tents be pitched with their backs to the south-west, and as close as may be under the lee of some protection. This protection may take various forms. A recess in the side of a big thicket, or a wood with plenty of undergrowth, is excellent. So also is a bank and stout hedge, or a stone

wall, especially the kind common in Wales and Cornwall, which is crowned with a layer of turf and a hedge on the top. If there are bushes or small trees here and there along the fence, so much the better. The angle of an enclosure with one wall or hedge giving shelter from the west or south-west, and the other from another quarter, is a capital position. A low ridge of higher ground on the weather quarter is also helpful. A small tent pitched among tall bracken, or gorse bushes, or other undergrowth, or under the lee of an extensive outcrop of rocks, will also be fairly sheltered. But a bank and hedge give perhaps the best shelter of all.

“A common mistake of a novice,” says Galton, “lies in selecting a tree for his camping-place, which spreads out nobly above, but affords no other shelter from the wind than that of its bare stem below. . . . In heavy gales, the neighbourhood of a solitary tree is a positive nuisance. It creates a violent eddy of wind, that leaves palpable evidence of its

existence. Thus, in cornfields, it is a common result of a storm to batter the corn quite flat in circles round each tree that stands in the field, while elsewhere no injury takes place.”<sup>1</sup> Equally deceptive is the idea that good shelter is afforded by an isolated mass, such as a rock, or a haystack, or a small clump of trees or bushes. The wind sweeps around these obstructions in eddies. If, again, a tent is pitched at the foot of a steep declivity, it will not, as a rule, escape violent gusts, even though the wind blows from the other side of the hill. One of the roughest nights I ever spent in a tent was when camped in a position of this kind.

It is possible to provide shelter artificially, if it cannot be had naturally. Mr Lowndes suggests a screen of sacking or other cheap material pitched to windward of the tents, and held up by bamboo poles and guys. “Over and over again, in very rough weather, we would have given anything for such a screen, in parts where shelter

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Travel*, pp. 131-2.

was absolutely unattainable.”<sup>1</sup> I have tried this device, and I have found it of much service, especially when the wind veers round and blows from a quarter to which the tents are exposed. A north-east gale in August is not common on our western coast; but I have known it happen, and cause no little discomfort owing to the absence of all protection. The rain in this instance drove straight at our tent doors. A temporary screen on such occasions is most useful. Once, when camping in threatening weather on a mountain side, we built a dry stone wall about three feet high along the windward side of the tent. If the gusts can be kept away from the base of the tent, and prevented from lifting the fly-sheet, one essential condition of shelter has been gained.

Few camping experiences are more satisfactory than to find, on your return to camp during heavy weather, that except for a flutter or two of the canvas, and the uproar of the wind in the hedge behind

<sup>1</sup> *Gipsy Tents and How to Use Them*, p. 57.

you, your site is relatively an oasis of quiet. It is then, as black night descends and the volleying rain reinforces the onslaught of the gale, that you will congratulate yourself upon having preferred a sheltered site to one which, though perhaps more alluring, was lacking in this indispensable quality.



## VII

### FLOODS

“The devouring element in the universe had leaped out against me, in this green valley quickened by a running stream. The bells were all very pretty in their way, but I had heard some of the hollow notes of *Pan's* music. . . . Nature's good-humour was only skin-deep after all.”—  
R. L. STEVENSON.<sup>1</sup>

WHEN pitching tents by a stream, let the camper pay heed to the risk of flooding. In a lowland country, in ordinary weather, one can usually tell at a glance whether or not a site is secure. But if we go among high hills and rapid streams, it is very different. A few hours of heavy rain will often transform clear and languid waters into a dark and aggressive torrent flecked with foam. The trout fisherman, as he makes his way along these mountain streams, is often astounded to see the

<sup>1</sup> *An Inland Voyage.*

flotsam and jetsam of a spate caught in the bushes at the level of his eyes, or even higher. It seems incredible; yet there it is.

The necessity of caution can be illustrated by a few examples taken from actual experience. On the high ground above Festiniog, we once pitched our tents by the edge of a merry little burn which came racing down from the mountain behind. The burn was barely a foot wide, cold and clear, a delightful accessory to the camp. Flowers and ferns leant over it, and here and there it leapt over rocky shelves to form deep little pools of crystal purity, meet for the baths of the immortal gods. I was assured by the farmer that there was no risk of flooding: but his English was scanty, and perhaps he did not understand my question, or in the charming Celtic way was telling me what I wanted to hear. At first all went well. The weather was superb: the song of the burn dwindled to a murmur; and dams had to be built to keep our

pools deep enough. Then the cloudless spell broke: there came a startling deluge, and I returned to camp late one afternoon to find our streamlet changed into a thing of sound and fury. We worked hard with a spade and a borrowed pickaxe to deepen and straighten the channel. All would not do; and we turned from this futile toil barely in time to save the tents from being swamped. Then and there, and with all haste, the whole camp had to be shifted; and we were lucky to be able to finish this laborious job before darkness was upon us.

A similar but milder experience occurred when two of us were camping in the New Forest. The pitch was on a dry bank, well raised, beside a little brook. Thunderstorms with heavy rain passed over us, and gradually but surely the water rose. This was no mountain torrent, but as the evening wore on it seemed as though the still and brimming flow would creep round and over our tent floor in the night. Again we made a hurried move to higher ground. It turned out that we might have stayed where we

were, for the water, after coming within a few inches of where the tent door had been, receded before morning. But this forbearance could not be foreseen.

In the stormy camp, already mentioned, on Carmarthen Van, when we pitched our tents in a narrow gully, the site was at first tolerably dry. But before the thirty-six hours of rain were over, this adjective had ceased to be appropriate. The stream foamed past us in spate; and, though we were still above its level, its waters probably percolated the shingly soil, and combined with the drainage from the steep bank behind us to convert our pitch into something like a wet sponge. Move we could not, for shelter from the gale was worth more to us than the luxury of dry ground under foot; and there was no other shelter to be had. This was one of those occasions when the virtue of a sound groundsheet is appreciated.

During the season of 1920, exceptional rainfalls twice compelled us to shift camp. At Easter that year I camped with one of

my sons on the banks of the Camel in north Cornwall. The river was small, and the site dry, and apparently sufficiently raised. I received the usual assurance that this particular spot was in no danger of being flooded. During our stay we suffered from almost continuous rain. The crisis came on April 10 :

“Our experiences (I wrote next day) reached what I should dare to call a climax last night, if I had not had such repeated proofs of what the weather can do this Easter. The downpour last night continued for one and a half hours with extraordinary violence. There was fortunately little wind. As soon as I could, I went out to inspect. The night was cloudy and very dark ; it was still raining. The river had risen greatly. The seriousness of the situation lay in three things : first, that the river was already high before this deluge ; secondly, that this deluge must take time to work off. Much water would have to come down from the upper valley. And thirdly, more rain might fall upon ground already completely water-logged. R. turned in, but I paced about outside, as I wanted to see what the river was doing. Rain gradually ceased, stars came out, and the night was pleasant enough if it

would only keep so. I regretted that we had brought no lantern, but it was now so still that a candle burned steadily in the open. I drove a stick in at the edge of the flood. In a quarter of an hour the river engulfed it. The same fate befell two others. Another deluge would swamp us, for already the water was close to the back of the tent, and only two or three inches below it. It looked as if we might have to strike the tent in a tearing hurry in the dark, perhaps in pouring rain. It was now fine, and if we were to move, now was the time.

I called up R. He put on waders, sweater, and waterproof over his pyjamas. After a further inspection of the river, which was still rising, we decided to move. R. improvised a lantern by sticking a candle inside a cooking-pot, not on the bottom, but on the curving side. This sheltered the flame and answered well. We then splashed through flood-water to the upper field. Having found the gateway, we marked it with a handkerchief. We soon found a tolerable site. We returned and packed up with speed. We carried the stuff over in two loads of the trek-cart. Striking a tent in the dark is a complicated business, made worse in our case by the fact that we had an extra fly over the rear of the tent, and an extra sheet over one side. We carried the tent by itself with the poles in it, and set it up on the new site. The job by daylight shows no defects, which really is to our

credit. The move took about three hours, and had the watch not said so I should have thought the time was an hour at most. We worked hard, with the constant spur of another cloud-burst. Not a drop fell while we flitted, but exactly as I came inside about 2 a.m. to unpack my kit and arrange my bed there sounded the old familiar rattle of rain on the roof. Our new site was about 200 yards from the old one. The intervening ground was bumpy, and a broad ribbon of flood-water had to be passed through on each journey. Our waders were the greatest possible comfort. Characteristically, no sooner had we left our sheltered site, where for ten days there had been no wind at all, than the wind rose and fell upon us in a succession of squalls."

The second occasion was more serious, and it was then that I received what, I hope, may prove my final lesson on the need of avoiding too close a proximity to mountain rivers. With the help of the same companion, I had established the family summer camp in the hill country above Llanbedr in North Wales. We were the advance party, and three others were to join us almost immediately. There was not much choice of site, and the spot we

finally selected was too little above the river to satisfy me. The farmer told me that it was never flooded, and certainly, notwithstanding recent heavy rains, it showed no signs of flood. Heavy rain fell almost at once, and the ground around us became so wet that on the second day we moved to a drier and somewhat higher site, about fifty yards further away from the swollen river. Here we set up the three main tents, while R. pitched his tent on a patch of turf on a rocky terrace about twenty yards away. For twenty-four hours all was well, and then towards night the weather again turned foul. The sequel is thus described in the log-book:

“If the narration of trials and labours make an interesting camp-log, the merits of this log should rank high. On Thursday night dirty weather set in about 7.30. We had a long bout of it. When I turned in the rain was very heavy, and the racket on the roof made sleep difficult. I lay awake till about midnight. I had two happy bits of inspiration in a small way, as it turned out. For no reason except convenience, I placed my



day clothes on our one and only camp-stool. Secondly, when about 1 a.m. I woke from dozing, the rain was so formidable that I got up and carefully filled and trimmed the hurricane lantern. It occurred to me that in the event of a flood we might want it in a hurry. I dropped off to sleep again in spite of the thrashing of the rain. I think I woke at 3, and it still poured. The next thing I was conscious of was R.'s voice at the tent door shouting to me that the river had swamped his tent, and deluged all his bedding and belongings. At the same instant a flood of very cold water swept into my Dome tent, and under, and in parts over, my bed. Of all forms of alarum, this, I am disposed to think, is one of the least pleasing.

"It was just before five (summer time) and still dark. Rain was coming down hard. I got a light quickly, and for the next few moments seemed to be doing forty things at once: snatching eider-down, bags of clothes, books, and many other things from the flood, and piling them on boxes and hampers, or hanging them up. Having lighted the lantern, I gave it to R., and told him to go back and get into any dry clothes, and bring his belongings over. I flung on my own clothes, and we both got into waders.<sup>1</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> Waders were again of the greatest service to us. Without them our plight would have been much worse, as the floor of the tent was under water. A flood like this is not an ordinary incident, and the site for a family camp should

were crowded moments of life ; whether glorious or not is another question.

“The whole tent was flooded : in the hollows to the depth of several inches ; everywhere the groundsheet was covered. Through the porch ran a torrent ; a few feet beyond was another newly created, wide, knee-deep, and rushing. When R. came back laden with dripping things he told me that water was all round us except on the higher parts of his rocky spur. Dawn was breaking : cold, wet, and cheerless. I looked out, and it was as he said.

“Our predicament was not only unpleasant, but it might have become serious. I now saw where the source of the trouble had been and still was. We had not been flooded directly by the main river. Had we still been on our original site we should have been so flooded, as we saw later on. But our present situation was this. Just abreast of our original site the river comes over a fall of about 4 feet drop. It comes over a ledge of rock which runs up at right angles to the river to disappear into the rising ground just beyond our second site. At that point there is a rocky channel, normally dry, which cuts through the ledge and meanders to the rear of our tents until it rejoins the main river a little

be free of all such risk. But in very bad weather waders are often extremely useful in camp work : *e.g.* when it is necessary to turn out by day or night in heavy rain to slacken the ropes of several tents.



BY THE FALL. THE SITE WHICH WAS FLOODED.

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distance away. Now on the further side of the rocky ledge, and on the upper level of the river, is a sort of backwater which winds among thickets, and ultimately runs along the far side of the ledge and enters the river just above the waterfall. This backwater is about 6 feet wide, and normally looks harmless. R. had pitched his tent on a grassy part of the ledge in apparent security. The water coming down from the valley above caused this backwater to fill and overflow. Two things then happened simultaneously. R.'s tent by the brink was swamped, and a heavy torrent of water came cascading over the gap in the ledge of rock which, as I have said, was a few yards behind our main camp. Thus our retreat was cut off. This overflow fall was big and heavy; and the ground just there, as we knew, was bog and boulders. Five hours later when we crossed it in daylight, and in waders, long after all heavy rain had ceased and after the flood had much subsided, we were thigh-deep in mid-stream. At five o'clock, it was clear that if the water continued to rise we might have to leave the tents to their fate and seek refuge on the higher points of the rocky spur, where already two or three sheep had fled for safety. In such event we should be able to do little more than get across the intervening flood with a waterproof sheet or two to protect ourselves from the weather.

.. Luckily, it did not come to this. Indeed,

that first startling inrush of water proved to be the climax of the flood. As soon as R. came back, I suggested that we should have tea and biscuits while we could. He proposed porridge as well. We spilt a lot of oatmeal on the floor by accident, which added to the hideous and surging mess. We had excellent porridge, however, even though the milk can had been partly filled up with flood water.

"All this time we saved what we could from the water. Some damage was done. A kapok mattress was ruined. Nearly all spare clothes were soaked. My day clothes which contained paper money escaped owing to their having been placed on a stool. Half a pound of tobacco was spoiled; some food was damaged; several books, and also blankets and other things.

"We sat in waders from about 5 till 8 watching the slow retreat of the flood. Then we had a second breakfast, and were glad to realize that the worst was over. We managed to bale most of the water out of the tent.

"After this inundation another move was inevitable. It was made next day, and this time to a position free from all risk of floods. The rainfall that I have described was undoubtedly very exceptional in its severity, but on these occasions it is the exceptional that happens. The valley above us was converted into a huge lake, and farmhouses were flooded. Local opinion as to the risks of flooding cannot always be

accepted. It is always a mistake to camp on low-lying ground in a mountain valley. The choice of a site for a long stay should not be hurriedly made. It will often be necessary to devote a whole day, or even longer, to this task, and it is always desirable to be able to weigh and compare the merits and defects of alternative sites before making a final decision."

## VIII

### KITCHEN AND MENU

“At these ways of ours no doubt many a housekeeper will turn up her nose, but I must assure her with all respect that never in the course of her career and with all her cleanliness has she prepared food which gave its consumer such supreme satisfaction as ours did us.”—FRIDTJOF NANSEN.<sup>1</sup>

“We cooked supper as if we were a band of careless folk taking our pleasure in the wilds. Wood smoke is always for me an intoxication like strong drink. It seems the incense of nature’s altar, calling up the shades of the old forest gods, smacking of rest and comfort in the heart of solitude. And what odour can vie for hungry folk with that of roasting meat in the clear hush of twilight?”—JOHN BUCHAN.<sup>2</sup>

“Do not forget your frying-pan.”—LORD AND BAINES.<sup>3</sup>

“The usual camp fault—not enough.”—CAMP SAYING.

SENTIMENT is all in favour of the gipsy’s fire of sticks and logs. The last touch of charm is given to an encampment by the savour, the colour, and the crackling of a wood fire. Such a fire will do its work

<sup>1</sup> *The First Crossing of Greenland.*      <sup>2</sup> *Salute to Adventurers.*

<sup>3</sup> *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life.*



well enough if there is plenty of good fuel, a well-made fireplace, a hearty pair of bellows, and a cook of unconquerable soul. In many of my camps I have had no other means of cooking. Yet I use the wood fire no longer, except as an occasional auxiliary. I have been won over by the Primus lamp; and I am conscious that this change of front calls for explanation.

If a person goes camping for the excellent reasons that he is in love with the technique of it, and finds pleasure in the rigour of the game, by all means let him use a wood fire. Fire, like running water, is a live thing; and he who undertakes to manage either will have his hands full. Merely to find the fuel will often mean working overtime. A camp fire which has to serve six or eight people is a gluttonous devourer of wood, thick stuff as well as thin. Even where wood is abundant, gathering and cutting it up takes time; and there are moors and shores where wood is almost as scarce as coal. The sea may throw up driftwood, and driftwood will sometimes consent to

burn, but the reek of it means a cook dissolved in tears. Peat burns well with the aid of bellows, and its aroma is delicious; but peat is not often to be had. Then there must be stuff for kindling, and for this purpose nothing is better than dead gorse and heather stalks which have been charred by heath fires. The fuel when gathered must be protected from rain and dew. Then there is the fireplace; and of fireplaces there are several kinds, the simplest consisting of a backing of log or stone, with flanking stones at each side. The front should be open, so that the blast from the bellows can pass into the vitals of the fire. Pots can be slung from a single kettle-prop of iron, or more conveniently from hooks hanging from an iron rod, supported by uprights at each side of the fireplace. All this part of the business is simple. What costs time and labour is the finding and maintaining of a sufficient supply of good fuel.

If we rely upon a wood fire all our cooking must be done out of doors. The true

Gipsy tent, with its baulk, is the only tent which will allow a fire to be made under its cover, and it has been hinted already that this arrangement is not faultless.<sup>1</sup> In all weathers, then, we must go outside to cook. This need not be a very serious matter, even in bad weather, if it is only necessary to cook for one or two persons. If, however, half a dozen people are camping together, and large vessels must be brought to the boil, and often kept boiling for a long time, the case is altered. The cook's task in bad weather is at once made hard and tedious. It calls for skill and patience to keep a fire burning heartily when it is blowing and raining hard. The cook must wear oilskins, and these dripping garments he must lay aside every time he enters the tent. If darkness is coming on, he must get out his lantern. If his fuel becomes wet, his fire will be rebellious. Some of his vessels he must protect from the rain. All this means a slowing down of the routine of cooking, of

<sup>1</sup> Chapter V.

meals themselves, and of washing up. It means also that the cook's job changes from pastime into toil. To be obliged to do all cooking out of doors when camping in wintry weather must greatly diminish the comfort of the whole party.

Some campers may make light of all these objections, and I have no quarrel with them if they do. We find our pleasure in various ways, and I have often found mine sitting back to wind and rain, plying the bellows with smarting eyes and an inner sense of triumph. But perhaps there comes a time when we value camping not least for the leisure it affords: leisure to read and write, to rest, to fish, or to explore. When this mood takes hold of us, we shall find ourselves contriving how to cut down the time and labour consumed by the daily routine. And the first problem we shall attack will be the cooking. If we put the matter to the test, we shall find that we can shorten and simplify the cook's task materially, and achieve better results, by exchanging the wood fire in the open for

the Primus lamp under cover. The gain is so real that sentiment must give way.

A conservative camper once assured me, with no little heat, that the best place for such an infernal contrivance as a Primus lamp was the bottom of the river. I forget what his grievance was, nor does it matter, for the case has passed beyond argument. Scott used these lamps on his South Polar expeditions. After calling attention to the necessity of handling them with care, he says: "We ultimately placed such reliance on them that we never thought of taking an alternative lamp."<sup>1</sup> The worst that can be said about the Primus is that it insists upon being treated with respect. It resents rough or careless usage. The nipple must be regularly pricked: the burner must be properly heated when starting the lamp, and a small supply of washers, prickers, and spare parts must always go with it to camp. If the camper will follow the instructions issued with

<sup>1</sup> *The Voyage of the Discovery*, Vol. i., pp. 387-8 (Nelson's edition).

each lamp, he will have little but praise for these wonderful inventions. They are clean, speedy, trustworthy, and economical. They can give a powerful heat or a gentle one, and they can give either for a long time without attention. They make no smoke, no deposit of soot on the pots, and if kept clean they make no smell. The lamps themselves are small, and are easily packed. The smallest size, which is very efficient, can be taken to pieces and carried in the pocket. The Primus dislikes draughts, and if used outside the tent it should have the protection of a wind-screen. Such a screen can easily be made out of calico and thin bamboos or stiff wires. In really cold weather, the dry heat of a Primus quickly and thoroughly warms the whole tent. There are two kinds of lamp, the "roarer" and the "silent." Those who dislike the insistent buzz of the former will naturally prefer the latter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since I wrote these lines I have had an experience with a Primus lamp which I feel bound in honesty to record. One of the lamps in use refused to burn well. A new nipple was put in, and the reservoir was cleaned out. There

Two Primus lamps of normal size will do all the heating and cooking for a camp of six or eight people. It is astonishing how quickly they do their work. Take the breakfast routine. On turning out, lamps are filled for the day, one is lighted, and enough water put on for those members of the party whose luxurious habits require hot water at that hour. He who undertakes this task will just be able to stow his

was apparently still some obstruction in the small tubes of the burner, for the lamp continued to burn poorly. I applied force to the pump, which worked stiffly, with the result that the lamp exploded in my face in a sheet of flame. I was rather painfully scorched, and was lucky to escape so lightly. I found that the bottom of the reservoir had bulged and burst out in one spot. I never heard of a similar accident. In spite of it, I retain confidence in these lamps, but I urge advisedly (1) that lamps should never be overfilled with oil; (2) that force should never be applied to a reluctant pump; (3) that a faulty lamp should be discarded until it can be sent to a skilled repairer; and (4) that if it is necessary to give a second dose of spirit to the burner, the dose should be administered with a spoon or small measure, and *never from the spirit-can itself*. The latter course was once taken in one of my camps, with the result that the can exploded in flames, and the tent was nearly set on fire. In short, the Primus lamp, as stated in the text, *must be treated with respect and with habitual carefulness*. Note.—There are several ways, all rather tiresome, of cleaning out the tubes of a faulty burner. Particulars will be found in the *Hand-book* of the Camping Club.

bedding by the time the water is ready. He then puts on a liberal allowance of water for the wash-up, and by the time he is dressed, or before, it will be boiling, and can be stood aside under a cloth. The second lamp is then lighted. While the first lamp cooks the porridge, the second boils the tea water and fries the trout, bacon, and potatoes. These operations will finish simultaneously. One lamp is then extinguished. The other, lowered to a tiny flame, keeps the frying-pan hot while the porridge is consumed, and then, once more pumped up, brings the wash-up water again to the boil. Before breakfast is over, the lamp can be put out. These operations have followed one another without a moment's loss of time, and without any hitch or trouble. It is doubtful if the cooking could be done quicker or better in a first-class hotel. Here, for example, is a note about making tea :

“ We reached camp at 5.8. At 5.22 tea was made (for five), laid out at the side of the lane, and ready. This was not an attempt to beat



the record. But it shows how quickly things can be done in camp."

Although I still find a wood fire a most useful and economical auxiliary in a stationary camp, I have succumbed, therefore, to the Primus lamp. It is true that paraffin must be obtained once or twice a week, and that there is a prejudice in favour of keeping paraffin in solitary confinement. But the journey to the village shop seldom or never has to be made for the sake of paraffin alone. The economy of consumption is remarkable. During a stay of five days in the New Forest, two of us relied entirely on the small variety of Primus, known as the "Pocket." The day's work for this lamp, and the total consumption of oil, is thus recorded:

"(1) The lamp boils about 2 pints of water for C. to use on getting up. (2) It cooks the porridge—a run of twenty-five minutes. (3) It boils 2 pints for tea at breakfast. (4) It boils water for eggs, or fries eggs, etc. (5) It boils about 2 pints for the breakfast wash-up. (6) It boils water for lunch. (7) It boils water as before for tea. (8) It boils the

wash-up water for tea. (9) It boils water for cocoa at supper, or cooks the soup. (10) It cooks the main supper dish. (11) It boils the supper wash-up water. (12) It boils about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pints for C. Sometimes it may do a little less than all this in a day, but as often a little more. The total consumption of oil in the five days cannot be much more, if any, than 2 pints. The lamp has never given the slightest trouble."

When trek-cart camping with the same companion, we carried two lamps. They used less than half a gallon of oil in five days. On another occasion, two of us with only one lamp used two pints in a week.

Aluminium is the best material for cooking-pots. It is the lightest: it does not rust, and contents are less likely to be burned (especially porridge) in an aluminium than in a tin vessel. Pans should nest, one within another, for economy of packing. In this case they will need detachable handles, and these handles should be trustworthy. Lids, except for the outermost vessel, complicate the nesting: tin plates do equally well. A tea-pot (metal) is a

convenience, not a necessity. Two deep aluminium soup plates should be taken for each person. Very small aluminium plates are a convenience at tea-time. Mugs are better than cups and saucers: let them be of china or enamelled iron, never of aluminium. Knives, forks, and spoons should be kept in a light wooden tray or box rather than in a bag. A wash-up bowl, a small mop or two, a scrubbing brush, a coarse sponge, and a liberal supply of clouts (tea cloths) are among the indispensables.

In most camping books there is too much talk of cookery. We do not retire to tents to indulge in orgies. That we enjoy food more in camp than elsewhere is true; but this is because we are hungrier, because the food is cooked well and served hot, and because the menu is plain. The simplest fare is the most welcome, and there is seldom need to spend much time in getting it ready. On the other hand, the cook's work calls for skill of a modest but genuine order. Some people are naturally apt, but anyone can become a

passable camp cook who has a mind to do so. With a good Primus and aluminium vessels, we have a perfect equipment for the work. There is also the stimulus of frank criticism.<sup>1</sup>

The staple camp foods are bread, biscuits, oatmeal, meat (including bacon and fish), eggs, cheese, butter, milk, sugar, cocoa, tea, jam, marmalade, golden syrup, potatoes and other vegetables, rice, and fruit. If zealots like to make their own bread they can try, but less pushing people will be content with the variety sold at the village shop. Bread can be kept in a canvas bag for a week if necessary. Biscuits should be plain, and must be kept in tins. Oatmeal should be the best that can be got. Tastes differ; but a good blend is coarse oatmeal and

<sup>1</sup> Some campers, in stationary camps, use metal ovens. I have not found these very efficient when worked with a Primus, and I am doubtful if it is worth while to take them. There are various ways of constructing makeshift ovens for use with wood fires. The most ingenious that I have heard of is that suggested by Mr E. F. Knight in *The Cruise of the 'Alerte'*. "The cooking," for a large party, "was all done out of doors, a neat oven having been constructed of stones and plaster of Paris."

Quaker oats. There is no finer dish than camp porridge, and for three reasons. First, because in camp one person stirs the pot the whole time and dares not shirk the task; secondly, because the porridge is served directly it is cooked; and thirdly, because porridge is a true open-air food. Porridge and new milk is the foundation of camp breakfasts, and the same dish will sometimes be found acceptable at supper.

Most people will wish to have fresh meat once or twice a week. It is not absolutely necessary, but a well-cooked chop is an agreeable change. Tinned and preserved meats should be used as little as possible. If a substitute for fresh meat must be found, let it rather be eggs, or fish (including sardines), or soup with plenty of potatoes and vegetables. Very good soups are sold in packets. Big Spanish onions, for those who do not abhor this admirable vegetable, are capital. "Nothing," says Sir Samuel Baker, "is so good a substitute for meat as an onion." In Upper Egypt this intrepid traveller "lived for days upon

nothing but raw onions and sun-dried rusks.”<sup>1</sup>

Bacon bears with porridge the brunt of the attack at breakfast. There is an art in frying bacon which not every one can acquire: happy is the camp which boasts an expert. The proper supporters of bacon are eggs, trout, and potatoes. Enough potatoes should be cooked at the chief meal to provide a surplus for the morrow's breakfast. Cooks should be encouraged to present fried potatoes in a variety of appetising forms.

Cheese, like porridge, is an open-air food. It is worth while to take pains to secure plenty of the best. In a stationary summer camp it will often happen that the chief meal is taken at mid-day. In that case the normal supper may very well be bread, cheese, and cocoa. Simple as it is, this is always a welcome meal.

Rice appeals to the camper partly because of its small bulk. It is useful for curries; and if boiled with the addition of milk, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia*, p. 61.

served hot or cold with jam or syrup, or prunes, it makes a fairly popular dish. There may be a member of the party who has the zeal and skill to vary the second course at dinner by making pancakes, junkets, blanc-mange, or that sustaining delicacy known as "spotted dick." Such dishes relieve the monotony of bread and jam. A tin of toffee is a legitimate camp luxury.

Fresh fruit of the cultivated kinds is often difficult to obtain. There are, however, wild raspberries, bilberries, and blackberries. Blackberries are often very plentiful in the semi-cultivated districts to which the camper resorts. They are a valuable addition to the menu, and it is a happy circumstance that some people enjoy gathering them. Stewed elderberries make a passable dish of startling hue. Among wild products none surpasses the mushroom. The angler can sometimes mask the poverty of his basket by picking the mushrooms as he passes through the meadows. A royal breakfast dish is a mixed grill of trout,

bacon, mushrooms, and potatoes. Mushrooms and potatoes, with plenty of good gravy, make a capital first course at dinner.

If camp meals are run on these simple lines no one will be made ill, and the cook's task will be light. Those who must have a more luxurious diet can have it if they are prepared to give the time and labour. There is also scope for experiment. An early log-book says :

"Last night we made another experiment in cooking. A rib of beef arrived which seemed made for our largest cake tin. Why not cook it in the ashes? A small fire was made in a hole in the ground. As it burned down, the tin with its contents was buried in the embers. On the tin rested a soup-plate to keep out dust. On the soup-plate another fire was lighted. At half-time the joint was turned. In an hour and a half altogether it was done, and to our thinking no roast beef ever surpassed it."

Pastry can be baked in like manner. The result can be delicious or tragic, and as there is no knowing which it will be, the interest of the experiment is enhanced.



Many other shifts and expedients are practised by explorers and trappers, and some of these are described in Galton's *Art of Travel* and in other books.<sup>1</sup>

A camp cook should always be praised, even if he (or she) deserves it.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

## IX

### WASHING UP

“‘We must wash up first,’ Davies replied, and I was tactfully introduced to one of his very few ‘standing orders,’ that tobacco should not burn, nor post-prandial chat begin, until that distasteful process had ended. ‘It would never get done otherwise,’ he sagely opined.”—ERSKINE CHILDERS.<sup>1</sup>

“If objection be taken to such work as ungentlemanly, no one will dispute that neglect of cleanliness and order, begotten of idleness and silly pride, is infinitely more so.”—R. T. M’MULLEN.<sup>2</sup>

“Hot water makes the boys brisk.”—CAMP SAYING.

“If it were done, when ’tis done, then ’twere well  
It were done quickly.”—SHAKESPEARE.

THERE is one detail of camp routine of such ill-fame that to be silent about it would be cowardice. This is washing up. The very expression is uncouth, and the thing itself is regarded as worse. It probably does more to give camping a bad name than anything else. There seems to be some-

<sup>1</sup> *The Riddle of the Sands.*

<sup>2</sup> *Down Channel.*

thing indelicate, even repulsive, about a pursuit which compels you to play the scullion. Let us, therefore, look into this matter, and know the worst.

Washing up is a refinement. It is not a necessity. When Nansen crossed Greenland his cooking-pot was never washed. As a special favour, one member of the party was allowed to lick and scrape it after use as clean as tongue and fingers could make it. The same vessel was used for soup, stew, chocolate, and tea. "It was not an uncommon sight to see on the bottom a wonderful conglomeration of the remains of soup or stew mixed with half-dissolved lumps of chocolate or obtrusive tea-leaves." "Our methods," says Nansen placidly, "suited us." Water was very scarce. "We had no time to do more than simply eat for eating's sake; and the interior of Greenland is certainly not the place for the fastidious or the epicurean."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The First Crossing of Greenland*, p. 300. Cp. Sir Robert Baden Powell :—"When my wife and I went trekking on the desert in Algeria we only had one stewpan to do all our cooking, and one old preserved milk tin for all our drinking.

If, however, washing up is a refinement, it is one of those refinements which people not engaged in crossing the interior of Greenland insist upon retaining. This is the more creditable because washing up is admittedly a nuisance, which every camper would escape if he could. Possibly it may pass for a lowly form of art. It certainly calls for skill, and the honest performance of it produces a sombre glow of satisfaction. But nobody loves it for its own sake. To be obliged to clean up one's own messes, instead of leaving the distasteful task to others, may be a discipline of moral value; but disciplines of moral value are never popular. Nevertheless, the business is not as black as it is painted. Like many bugbears, it surrenders to a firm front. It has got to be done, and it has got to be done quickly.

In this mystery, there are three secrets. The first is to wash up immediately after "That, I admit, was too small an allowance for comfort, and we had to boil our coffee in the same pot that cooked our fish! Yes, and our vegetables and our pudding." *Camping* (Official Organ of the Camping Club). Vol. xvi. 109.

each meal. Delay is fatal. Camp morality drops to pieces if there is any paltering with this imperious obligation. *Laissez faire* will not do here; recalcitrant minorities must be trodden under. The second secret is to have plenty of nearly boiling water obtrusively ready. The hotter the water, the better and quicker the work will be done.<sup>1</sup> And the third secret is that everyone should bear a hand; conscripts for this job, not volunteers. Do not be beguiled into agreeing to shifts, one shift on duty to-day and off duty to-morrow, unless the party is a very large one. If everybody helps, and all together, there will be no martyrs, and no offensive glorying.

The work should be done at top speed. Everybody wants to get it over. Begin by putting away all food. Next, collect all the dirty articles. Then, let one person ply

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities recommend the camper to use various patent cleansers when washing up. There is no need to incur the expense and bother of procuring these things, *if only the camper will insist on having very hot water for his wash up.* And if the fire or lamp is used at all for a meal, there is no trouble whatever in getting the hot water.

mop and hot water with all his might, while the rest dry, also with all their might. Keep everybody busy. Meet "ca' canny" with a shower of plates and cutlery. At a time like this no gossip, or argument, or intelligent talk should be tolerated. Gibes and irrelevancies, on the other hand, should be encouraged. So also should those wipers who are goaded by a desire to outwipe other wipers. If anyone wants to sing a song with a chorus let him do so, for such music quickens the pace, diverts the soul, and warms the blood. Finally, let all the cleansed articles be put away in their proper places, and the clouts hung up to dry. The whole affair comes and goes like the black squall which for a moment blots out the sun. It will seldom take more than five minutes, and if it takes more than ten, it is a just penalty for indulgence in an orgy.

Thus is victory organized.

#### NOTES

(1) *On cleaning the Porridge Pot.*—Every household cook knows that this operation is facilitated by filling the pot with water as soon as the porridge is served, and leaving it to stand for two or three hours or longer.

(2) *On cleaning Potatoes.*—A camping party consumes a great many potatoes, and the job of cleaning them may absorb more time than can always be spared conveniently. It can be greatly expedited and simplified by the following device: Take the potatoes to the stream in a pail or bucket with a stout handle. If the vessel has a lid, so much the better. Cover the potatoes with water, put on the lid, and twirl the vessel by the handle as quickly and vigorously as possible, first to the right and then to the left. Do this several times, changing the water on each occasion. Your potatoes, especially if recently dug, will become perfectly clean in a very few moments, and without any individual handling.

## X

### BEDS

“The oldest campaigners are the most particular in making themselves comfortable at night.”—GALTON.<sup>1</sup>

“His body couchéd in a curious bed.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“I made me a Squab or Couch, with the Skins of the Creatures I had kill’d, and with other soft Things, and a Blanket laid on them, such as belong’d to our Sea-Bedding, which I had saved, and a great Watch-Coat to cover me.”—DEFOE.

SOME persons find bed-making the most perplexing novelty of camp life. It would certainly puzzle the most accomplished housemaid; but there is no reason why a camp bed should be a bed of suffering. We shall not attain a happy result, however, without taking thought. Indifference to our couch is a token of amateurishness, and brings its own penalty.

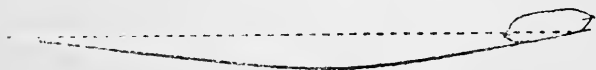
A hammock takes up too much room to permit of its use in a tent of ordinary size.

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Travel.*



Camp bedsteads are heavy, and seldom comfortable. Often they creak and groan if the occupant makes the slightest movement. They require some kind of mattress, for warmth beneath us is just as important in our beds as warmth above us. In all camping which tries to reduce weight to a minimum, the only course is to make the bed upon the floor of the tent. This is in every way the best plan.

Galton points out that a human being, when sleeping in a natural attitude, fits into a concavity of about six inches in greatest depth. A hollow curve of this kind is produced when one lies upon a spring mattress.



Somehow or other, with variations to suit individual tastes, such a hollow has to be created on a hard and flat surface out of miscellaneous and often unpromising materials. Most of the discomfort of a badly arranged camp bed arises less from

the hardness of the ground than from unkindly flatness. It may be supposed that such discomfort reaches its acme in a plank bed. The problem, then, to be solved is how to create a couch possessing the desired contour.

There is more than one way of doing this, and it matters not which way is adopted provided the result is satisfactory. For example, before laying down the groundsheet, we can scoop out with a knife or trowel a hollow in the ground big enough to take the hips. The edges of the hollow should be smoothly bevelled. This plan works fairly well; but it is not easy, particularly in the case of a large tent, to hit beforehand upon the exact spot where you will wish to make your bed. Another plan is to dispose bracken, straw, dry leaves, heather tops, or other materials, beneath the groundsheet in such a way as to produce the desired result. This device is very well if our stay is to be a short one. Otherwise, as I once discovered, such bedding, unless perfectly dry, may heat

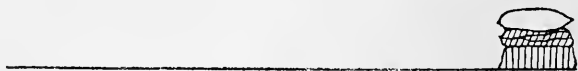
beneath the groundsheet, and fill the tent with disagreeable odours. Moreover, all such bedding quickly becomes beaten down nearly as hard as the ground itself. Upon the whole, therefore, it is best to lay the groundsheet upon a smooth patch of turf, sloping gently towards the door of the tent, and nightly to build the couch upon the sheet. The task ought not to occupy more than a very few minutes. Once a satisfactory couch is achieved, the routine of making it should be strictly followed on the succeeding nights.

Let us begin with the pillow. Novices often find a difficulty in making it high enough. This is because they have never reflected upon the varied composition possible to pillows. They seem shocked by the suggestion that the base of a pillow can be made of almost anything. Boots are excellent; so also are books. Even unopened tins of food, or stones, can be turned to account. A firm foundation having been laid, the next thing is to dispose clothes, suitably folded, upon it, the softest materials

being left to the last. Finally, let the camper be wise enough to take with him a cushion, however small, stuffed with the best down. There is no effective substitute for this invaluable article. Air cushions as pillows are to most people an abomination.

The pillow is generally the weak point in makeshift beds, and it is worth while to make sure that it will be comfortable. The three essentials are a stable foundation, an adaptable and yielding superstructure of sufficient height, and a down cushion.

Our bed, then, has advanced thus far :



It is now necessary to produce, according to our taste and fancy, a curving resting-place for the body. Two things must be done. (1) The spaces marked A and B in the sketch below must be suitably filled ;



and (2) there must be something soft and yielding at C to take the hips.

My own plan, even when cycle camping, is to fill the space at A with a strong, flat, ribbed air cushion, reinforced by any spare clothes or empty canvas bags available. Let any old newspapers be placed next the groundsheet, for they are excellent non-conductors of heat. A flannel shirt, or a sweater, should be uppermost. B is less important. It can be treated in the same way, using a smaller cushion. Very good thin cushions, stuffed with hair, are sold by Mr Holding, and they answer well in this position. It matters little what we use, provided that it is not uncomfortably hard, and that the effect of it is to produce a rise in the floor between the hip bone and the knee. Both A and B, but particularly A, must be built up sufficiently to allow a small cushion to be placed at C without neutralizing the contour. A little cushion of down will serve, or a folded sweater; or, better than either, one of those circular red rubber air cushions, shaped like a lifebuoy.

Coverlets come next. For the cycle camper there is little choice; it is a down

quilt or nothing. Down quilts made expressly for campers are sold by several firms. They weigh from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 lbs., and pack in marvellously small compass. They make capital coverlets, being light, warm, and pleasant to the touch. With one of these coverlets of ample size, a Burberry cape or an oilskin coat, a sweater, and flannel pyjamas, the cycle camper can defy a night of frost and snow. In a permanent camp our choice can be wider. Some people prefer blankets, and do not recoil from the most hirsute kinds. Others use sleeping bags, and very luxurious these bags can be. Then there is the army device which is certainly effective. The soldier has his own groundsheet, about 6 ft. by 3 ft. The sides of the sheet are eyeletted. The blankets are judiciously arranged upon the sheet. A cord lacing is then passed from side to side, beginning at the foot and reaching rather more than half-way up the bed. The lacing is then drawn tight enough to lift the edges of the sheet a few inches from the ground. The

bedclothes are thus held firmly together upon the sheet, and the soldier craftily inserts himself between the right pair of blankets. It is an interesting spectacle. I myself prefer the freedom and looseness of a down quilt to any form of bag or lacing. In severe weather, an extra blanket is useful; but in summer the quilt alone will, as a rule, be found warm enough.

The camper can add to the comfort of his bed by building a rampart of miscellaneous articles, such as bags, boxes, or hampers, along that side of his bed towards which he is accustomed to turn his back when sleeping.

The final counsel about beds is important. Except when actually in use, or when spread out in the sun to air, all coverlets, pillows, cushions, and pyjamas should be kept in a damp-proof canvas sack. The very first thing a camper should do on rising is to stow his bedding in this receptacle. It is then out of the way, secure against damp and dirt, and the sackful of soft materials makes a capital seat or cushion.

## XI

### CARE OF TENTS

“In language too mild to express my real sentiments, I dislike a *sloven*.”—R. T. M‘MULLEN.<sup>1</sup>

“To succeed in anything at all, one should go understandingly about his work and be prepared for every emergency.”—CAPTAIN SLOCUM.<sup>2</sup>

THE tent which is our temporary refuge and home is to be treated with respect. We look to it to shelter us in all weathers; and this it will not do, unless we take care of it. If we fail to do so, we may be sure that the penalty for our neglect will fall upon us at the most awkward moment.

When not in use, tents should be stored in a dry place. They should never be put away for the winter, or for any length of time, when damp. Sometimes we may not be able to avoid striking tents in the rain, and packing them when wet. If they are

<sup>1</sup> *Down Channel*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sailing Alone Around the World*.



to be used again within a few hours, this matters little; but if they are to be sent off by rail, it will be best to take them as passenger's luggage rather than commit them to a journey by goods train, which may last a week or longer. On reaching home, tents should always be taken out of their bags, and spread out in the sun, or under cover, until they are thoroughly dry. Damp lurks longest in those parts where the canvas is folded; along seams, at corners, and around eyelets.

Before starting on an expedition, all tent gear should be minutely overhauled. Poles should be examined; and if there are joints, they may have to be greased. Door and other fastenings are apt to work loose and to need repair. Slides sometimes fail to grip, and should be replaced by new and probably thicker ones. Guys may need renewal. Very likely the ends of cords will need to be re-whipped. Pegs may be missing; others, if of wood, will probably need re-pointing. Metal pegs may need straightening. A few extra pegs should

always be taken. After a season's wear and tear, numerous small repairs and replacements are sure to be necessary.

When in use, tents should be examined daily, and often more than once. Even a beginner knows that the effect of moisture on ropes and fabrics is to cause them to shrink, and the effect of dry weather the reverse. Unless all guys are slacked off during a wet spell, either the pegs will be pulled out of the ground, or the guys will part or be torn away from the fabric of the tent. If wind accompanies the rain, the slacking must be done gradually. The camper will sometimes be called upon to turn out in the middle of the night in order to attend to his ropes. The effect upon them of dew or fog will sometimes be nearly as marked as that of rain. Similarly, ropes and cords, which have been wetted, must be tautened as they dry in the sun and wind. The camper will save himself much trouble, if he makes a practice of overhauling every guy-rope last thing at night before turning in. He will quickly



A FAMILY ENCAMPMENT.

From left to right: Whymper, Hexagon (with porch), Dome (with porch), small A-tent, Windscreen beyond the Dome.



learn what degree of tension is desirable under ordinary circumstances.

In pitching a tent, it is worth while to take trouble to secure a correct set. A few experiments will show what method answers best; and this method, once found, should be strictly followed. Not only is a well-pitched tent more comely and stable, but the strain is evenly distributed over the fabric, and its power of resisting rain is increased. Folds or wrinkles are always weak spots in wet weather, and may cause a drip. The skirting of a tent should be pegged down tightly, but not too tightly. Something should be allowed for the shrinkage of the material when wetted.

Gumption is needed in driving pegs. I should not point out that a peg should be driven at an angle of about 45 degrees,<sup>1</sup> sloping away from the tent, had I not recently seen a bell tent, the pegs of which were driven perpendicularly. Wooden pegs

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the peg and the guy-rope which is looped over it should form a right angle.

should be driven until the hold, as tested by the hand, is good. If driven too deep, extraction will be troublesome and likely to result in casualties. Skewers, or small metal pegs, such as are used with cycle tents, should be driven to the head or nearly. A metal peg can easily be drawn by passing another through the ring at the top, and using it as a handle. In a permanent camp, all pegs should be examined every two or three days, especially after rough weather. The continued strain, and the constant tugging of the guys, often causes them to work loose. Two or three taps with the mallet or a stone will rectify this. Occasionally a peg should be moved to a new position. If a cycle camper is using small metal pegs, and the ground does not give good hold, two pegs instead of one can be used with advantage for the leading guys. A good plan is to push the second peg through the eye of the first, and across the line of tension.<sup>1</sup>

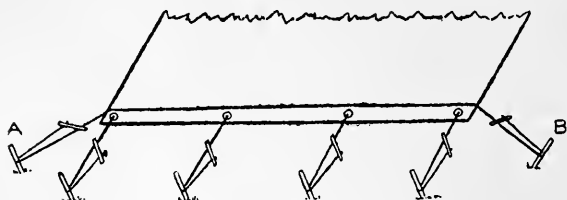
<sup>1</sup> For very small tents wooden skewers, which are very light, answer very well. Two should be used at each guy.

Guy-ropes will last for several seasons. They are likely, however, to degenerate just where the rope passes round the peg. This part of the rope, being lowest, is naturally the last to dry, and it is often buried in long grass. The strands are accordingly liable to rot just at this point. By occasionally moving the peg, or by shortening or lengthening the rope, this risk can be minimized.

It is not good for fly-sheets to be allowed to flap and flutter violently. The noise is also disturbing. This flapping and fluttering in wind is generally due to one or both of two causes. The fly-sheet may be too short. Unless it comes down on each side of the tent to within a few inches of the ground, it is bound to prove a wind-trap. Or it may be that the guys and pegs which hold down the fly-sheet are not in their right positions. If the sheet persists in being noisy, it can be muzzled.

They should be driven at the usual angle, and so as to cross one another, the parts above ground forming a V. Spares should be carried, to allow for breakages.

Drive a peg at A and B, and connect the two with a cord, placing a moderate strain



upon it. In a stormy wind, a second cord can be carried right round the tent and flysheet at a higher level.



## XII

### FURTHER NOTES ON ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

“I went to work to make me a little Tent with the Sail and some Poles which I cut for that Purpose, and into this Tent I brought every Thing that I knew would spoil, either with Rain or Sun.”—DEFOE.

“Many things which in civilized life I had believed to be of the utmost importance, I now found to be fatuous trivialities.”—CAPTAIN GWATKIN-WILLIAMS, C.M.G., R.N.<sup>1</sup>

“Resourcefulness—that is the slogan of this great game of living in the open.”—WARREN H. MILLER.<sup>2</sup>

A GOOD deal has already been said in this book about organization and equipment. A few remaining points can be treated briefly.

If a stationary camp for a family, or a party of friends, is in prospect, certain preparations will be necessary, and it should be settled in good time who is to be responsible for them. The work is not

<sup>1</sup> *Prisoners of the Red Desert.*

<sup>2</sup> *Camp Craft.*

heavy; from its nature it is interesting; and the enjoyment of all the party will be the greater if it is done well.

Assuming, then, that the questions of locality and site have been decided, it should be the duty of some person or persons to attend to equipment and initial supplies. The first step will be to make an inventory of all that is to be taken. This inventory should be written in a stoutly-bound pocket-book, which will last for several seasons. Once compiled, it can be amended and enlarged as experience suggests. This list will be of use when packing, and reference to it will save much laborious thinking, and the risk of omissions, on future occasions. The inventory should be classified in some simple way. My own headings are: Trek-Carts, Tents, Kitchen, General Stores, Personal, Food, Fishing.

About a month before the start, the main equipment should be decided upon, and any necessary purchases made. Tents and groundsheets, and all appurtenances, should be inspected in detail. It must be settled

whether the equipment is to include such things as chairs, stools, and a table. Chairs and stools are not really necessary, and they add to weight. Two or three square boat cushions, covered with canvas, are worth taking. As a rule, the campers will sit upon their sacks of bedding. Some kind of small table is almost a necessity, both for cooking and for other purposes. A square piece of three-ply wood, strengthened at the edges, and with holes at the corners into which short legs can be jammed, weighs little, and does very well.

If children are to be of the party, it will be worth while to give each of them a small, light mattress, upon which they can lay their blankets or sleeping-bag at night. This will greatly simplify their bed-making. Air cushions in youthful hands seldom live long. Excellent mattresses stuffed with kapok, and covered with waterproof material, can be obtained. They measure 6 ft. 6 ins. by 2 ft. 3 ins. A length of 3 ft. 3 ins. will accommodate all the upper part of the body; and, therefore,

one of these mattresses, if cut in half, will suffice for two beds.

It is difficult to say anything useful about personal outfit, for so much depends on individual taste, the season of the year, and the kind of camping. The most tiresome problem is that of waterproofs. If there is a really satisfactory waterproof I have yet to discover it. The chief weaknesses are these: (1) Many a raincoat, which will resist a shower or ordinary rain during an hour or so, fails if subjected to a prolonged bout of heavy driving rain. (2) Thin oilskins or mackintoshes tear like paper; thick ones are intolerably heavy. (3) Unless a man's legs are specially protected they will quickly be wetted to the skin. The raincoat simply shoots the water upon the knees and legs. If a man is to keep dry when walking for hours in bad weather, he must not only have a waterproof coat and good boots. He must have leggings below the knee, and leggings reaching from the knee to the top of the thigh. Thigh leggings are a nuisance to put on and off, and a

nuisance to walk in. But they are indispensable if the legs are to be kept dry. (4) Raincoats of all makes, even heavy oilskins, often fail under long exposure to prevent damp at the shoulders and arms. A short, light cape over the coat should cure this trouble, unless it is due to condensation arising from heat of the body.

The best way of lighting a tent is by candles, and the portly carriage kind is preferable. A hurricane lantern is often useful and sometimes indispensable. A small, sharp axe will be needed if there is to be a wood fire. A light, but strong iron spade should always be taken. A floor brush is required if large tents are to be kept clean. A tool-bag or roll, containing screw-hammer, screw-driver, small saw, gimlet, bradawl, file, pincers or pliers, screws, nails, wire, etc., must never be omitted. There should be a plentiful supply of spare rope, cord, and stout string kept in a special bag. At least one of the campers should carry a

compass: it is particularly useful when pitching the tents so as to ensure shelter from the weather quarter. Every camper going into the hills, or indeed anywhere, should carry a powerful whistle.

In a permanent camp, a latrine or sanitary tent is essential. A simple form of earth-closet should be adopted, and the spade is ready for the purpose.

Among minor necessities are a potato bag, canvas bread bags, bags for oatmeal, sugar, etc., a large can (or cans) for drinking water, boot-cleaning materials, housewife, a strip of canvas to serve as a door-mat, canvas or enamelled iron wash-basins, a baler or dipper for drawing water, canvas buckets, and a few simple medicines and preparations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Certain food supplies, *e.g.* tea, cocoa, salt, butter, biscuits, must be kept in tight-fitting tins or jars; but, whenever possible, bags should be used as receptacles. A bag, which may be made of thin canvas, is at once light and strong, and it possesses the great merit of taking up less room as the contents diminish. Some useful hints as to medicines are contained in this list from Mr Warren H. Miller's *Camp Craft*. "The kit is just a tin-box,  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{5}{8}$  inches in size, weight loaded,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ounces. It contains: A roll of surgical bandage, 2 feet long by 3 inches wide, already

The organizers must divide the whole mass of their equipment and luggage into two parts: (1) that part which is to go by goods train, and (2) that part which is to go by passenger train. Part (1) must be ready for despatch to the camp railway station a fortnight or more before the passengers start. Part (2) should be confined, as far as possible, to personal luggage and perishable food. It is a mistake, and sometimes an expensive one, to attempt to take more luggage by passenger train than the railway regulations allow.

In packing camp-equipment and luggage, there are several points to bear in mind. No package should be excessively heavy. If possible, let none be heavier than can be carried without difficulty by one person. The labour of carrying weighty packages over

treated with antiseptic solution (smells like iodoform); a piece of surgical tape, 16 inches long by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide; a small tube of carbolated vaseline; a safety-pin; ten two-grain quinine capsules; ten bismuth tablets for diarrhœa; one dozen small fever tablets; one dozen quarter-grain podophyllin pills for liver troubles and constipation; six headache pills; four bronchitis tablets; sewing-needle and thread; a button." (Pp. 151-2.)

rough ground, or even of lifting them about, is trying. Every package should be securely tied or corded. There is an art in this, which only experience can teach. The more the outfit can be packed into bags, hampers, and other receptacles expressly designed or suited to receive particular things, the easier and quicker will be the task of packing and unpacking. It is useful to keep a rough list of the main contents of each large package. Personal luggage, or the bulk of it, should be taken in canvas sacks. Boxes, trunks, suitcases, and large stiff leather bags are quite out of place in camp. The canvas sack is, indeed, invaluable to the camper. It is light, capacious, easily handled, easily stowed away, and at night it makes a useful supplement to the groundsheet.

Not only should the labels attached to every package be stout and also securely tied,<sup>1</sup> but on leaving camp it will be a con-

<sup>1</sup> This may seem superfluous advice, but it is not. A flimsy label tied with rubbishy string to the eyelets of a canvas sack, for example, is quite likely to be torn off on the railway journey. The chance of losing luggage, however



STRIKING THE TENT

*To face p. 156.*





venience to have labels in two colours, one colour for the luggage which is to go by goods train, and the other for the luggage which is to accompany the passengers.

In the case of a stationary camp for six or eight people, it will usually be advisable for two or three of them to act as an advance party. It will be the duty of the advance party to settle finally the site, to arrange with the farmer, to pitch the tents, and to collect the first supplies of food and stores which are to be bought locally. Similarly, at the end of the holiday, the best plan is for two or three persons to stay behind to complete the packing, and send off the packages.

Whoever takes a keen interest in camping and its experiences should keep a log-book. Such a record, if written from day to day when impressions are quite fresh, will always be of interest, if only to the writer. And there is no better way of well labelled, is very great in the holiday months ; and to the camper the loss of a single package, even if ultimately it turns up, may be extraordinarily tiresome. I write from painful experience.

making sure that the lessons of experience will not be lost than by noting them, as they occur, for future guidance. It is hardly necessary to add that a camping holiday affords endless opportunities to the amateur photographer.

### XIII

## MARAUDERS

“Weaving spiders, come not here :  
Hence you long-legg’d spinners, hence !  
Beetles black, approach not near ;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“A noise of sniffing made us turn round, and we beheld—*horribile dictu* !—a monster, bovine in shape, in the very act of nozzling a guy-rope.”—R. A. SCOTT-JAMES.<sup>1</sup>

THE list of animals (other than his fellow-creatures) from which the camper in this country is liable to suffer annoyance is happily short. It includes cattle, horses, pigs, dogs, cats, and possibly foxes.

It is asking for trouble to camp in a field where there are horned cattle. Almost certainly they will make themselves a nuisance. However staid and good-tempered their normal nature may be, they can seldom repress a blundering curiosity.

<sup>1</sup> *An Englishman in Ireland.*

The apparition of a tent seems to rattle their bovine nerves. With gingerly caution and troubled gaze they draw near the tents, and if not driven off will probably entangle horns and legs with the guy-ropes. Here is an example :

“We turned in early. I was brought out about midnight by an invasion of three cows. An Alderney persisted in grazing close to the little tent, and finally got mixed up with the ropes. I had to turn out, and drive them up the field.”

Sometimes cattle are pleased to fancy that the bigger ropes are put there for them to rub against. One would not grudge them this solace were it not for the fact that their ponderous attentions ensure instant disaster. Indeed, if cattle are in the field, tents can never be left unguarded, and the freedom of coming and going as one wills is destroyed. At night, their munching and heavy breathing some distance away seem close at hand to a person within the tents. The camper turns out, delivers his counter-attack, and settles down to sleep

again. But probably before slumber comes to him, their dilatory return once more rouses him. The game begins again; and the prospect of a good night recedes.

Cattle in a field are, in my experience, more troublesome than cattle grazing at large upon an open moor or hillside. Cattle in the open seem to follow a kind of route march, and when they have once passed you, they are not likely to return for many hours. On one occasion, my tents were invested by a herd of inquiring cows headed by a morose-looking bull. But their curiosity once spent or balked, they passed on, and we saw them no more.

Horses are usually less annoying than cattle; but there are exceptions. We once camped in a field which was used by cattle, and also by a horse. The cattle behaved according to their wont; the horse developed tactics of his own. The log-book says:

“ We began yesterday to be rather exercised

about the vagaries of a young cart-horse, lately put in our field. He is a grand beast, but we took him for a rogue at first sight. He was solitary, and seemed bored and sulky. He was bound to come past the tents to water at the lake, and he showed a baleful curiosity about the sanitary tent, which stands apart from the others. At first, it was easy enough to scare him away, but he soon learned to despise our tin-plate rattlings and fluttering towels. Instead of starting off at a gallop, at once awe-inspiring and comical, he would toss his head, trot a few yards, round up, and begin to sidle back again. So, after lunch, we rigged up the best protection we could against possible night raids. We enclosed the tents in a square, two sides being the field walls, and two being a rope and wire cordon. We dug a deep hole, and planted in it a derelict post. This made a corner. We put strong stays to the post, using the anchor as a tent-peg. Then we used the anchor rope, and other ropes, and a long piece of wire which we found lying about. We strained all these as tight as we could, and thus made a breast-high barrier, of little avail against a wilful animal, but enough, perhaps, to give a check and rouse us in our defence."

Later the same day, the log continues :

"After tea, I went out to fish. I was in the



boat at the far end of the lake, when I saw our friend, the horse, come down the hill. He made for the sanitary tent, and began to gnaw the ridge of it. I saw R. running to drive him off, and I pulled back to help him. It was too late. The tent was tumbled down, trampled on, and torn to tatters. The horse seemed sulky, and was difficult to drive. We drove him away a little distance, and he charged back upon the tent at a gallop. I cleared him out again, but he still hung about. Now that I had proof of the mischief he could do, I did not care about the idea of having him in the field another night. R.'s little tent is particularly exposed. So I sent R. to the farm to report the damage, and to ask if the horse could be put in another field. They agreed: and this was done, to our relief. Anybody who scoffs at my anxiety should have seen the havoc which this horse made in an instant of a strongly-erected tent, and should consider how he would like to sleep, or allow boys to sleep, within range of his murderous forefeet."

We thus got rid of the horse; but the cattle became such a nuisance that we had to move the camp to another site.

Of the other farm animals, sheep are proverbially harmless. Pigs, on the other hand, are capable of any crime. There

seems to be nothing that a pig will not try to eat. I once left a bundle of fishing-rods and a landing-net in a farmyard for a minute or two. When I came back, I found that a pig had eaten a big hole in the landing-net. If pigs find landing-net appetizing, it is likely that they would find a tent, not to mention the things inside it, a banquet.

I am sorry that I cannot give a good account of dogs. We have sometimes taken our own dog with us to camp, but though I think he would win the day if a referendum were taken, I find it best to leave him at home. Farmers who have sheep runs are apt to demur; a strange dog perturbs and attracts cattle; and he is not likely to be popular with the dogs of the farm. There may also be game preserves in the neighbourhood. As a rule, a dog will cause a good deal of trouble. On the other hand, it may happen that these objections do not arise, and that a dog not only adds, as, indeed, he always does, to pleasure, but is really useful. I once camped in Cornwall at a spot where we were occasionally

annoyed by inquisitive excursionists. The deep voice of our St Bernard was most effective in keeping these intruders at a distance.

It is a mistake to be too friendly with the dogs of the farm, or to attract them to the tents by giving them food, or by allowing scraps of food to be thrown away close by. The probable result will be that the dogs, and also the cats, will try to thief in the night, or when the tents are left unprotected. On one occasion we suffered a series of depredations in this way.

“Yesterday a cat or a dog entered my tent and ate nearly a pound of butter. To-day, though I fastened the tent carefully, a dog got in, tumbled everything about, and ate all our cheese. Fortunately, nothing else was open or accessible. The bread had been carried off some distance, but, being in a bag, had suffered no harm.”

The thieves grew bolder :

“Last night dogs visited the mess tent, tore it slightly, got in, and lifted a hamper lid with two cushions on it. They ate a loaf and a half :

carried off the butter pot, and did other damage, finishing a pan of rice, etc."

They paid another visit the next night:

"The dogs came again. The farm people declare that their dogs were shut up. R. heard them, but too late. They got no food, for it was securely fastened. But they tore and damaged the tent; dragged the food hamper partly outside, bending the tent-pole, and tearing off some of the strands of the hamper lid. This makes me think it must have been a large dog, as the hamper is heavy. In future it will have to be carried into my tent every night."

After this we set a booby trap, and at last the thief was caught in the act, and thoroughly scared:

"At 3.30 a.m. I was aroused by a noise of a tin being bumped along the ground. I went out quietly, and caught the marauder at it. He had dragged a large square biscuit box out of the tent, and was trying to make off with it. I caught sight of a brownish animal, not very big, which makes me think it may have been a fox. I chased him across the field. I have again set a booby trap, and it is not easy for him to get at any food without rousing some of us by upsetting things."

As to the tribe of smaller visitors, in-

cluding insects, the thought of which seems to trouble those persons who have what Mr Hudson calls the "indoor mind," it is only occasionally that campers suffer even slight annoyance from them. The worst plague is wasps. My experience is that in wild, hill country, they are rarely seen, and never in any number; but I have known them to be quite intolerable on the banks of a lowland river. In the same kind of situation, earwigs may be expected. Earwigs are innocent, if not fair to outward view, but they have an unpleasing habit of climbing up the inside of the tent, hiding in crevices, and tumbling down at unsuitable times upon unsuitable surfaces. If they come in battalions, this trick of theirs becomes tiresome. Ants are not popular in a tent, and the ground should be searched for nests before the tent is pitched. In some places, beetles are plentiful and intrusive, but it is not difficult to catch a beetle. Black slugs are sometimes extraordinarily common, and these also look better outside the tents.

They are particularly out of place in boots. Among the mountains, in still weather, midges often abound, especially in the early morning and in the evening. I have known the early morning bathe in the stream made a doubtful pleasure owing to the voracity of these little pests. Later in the day, horse flies are sometimes active. Snakes do not trouble campers; I have only twice seen a snake near tents. When sitting quietly in a tent I have seen a charming little lizard dart across the floor; but no one minds a lizard. Mice sometimes scurry about at night among the pots and pans outside: but we have never been troubled by rats. Moths in tireless succession, and those strange creatures called daddy-longlegs, will sometimes compete with one another in effecting their own cremation in the candle flame. Spiders intimidate some people, but they do no harm, and a spider is altogether too wonderful a personality to treat with discourtesy. In short, unless wasps descend upon a camp in such numbers that they crawl over every

kind of food, and it becomes impossible to eat a meal in peace or even safety, there is nothing in the host of small creatures to cause the least uneasiness to any intending camper. "These are mere house-bred feelings." The flea of civilization is more terrible than any of them.

## XIV

### TREK-CART CAMPING

“The pleasure of a day is not to be measured by the number of miles you have gone over.”—J. MACGREGOR (“Rob Roy”).<sup>1</sup>

“It is a passion, an old ineradicable instinct in us: the strongest impulse in children, savage or civilized, is to go out into some open place. If a man be capable of an exalted mood, of a sense of absolute freedom, so that he is no longer flesh and spirit but both in one, and one with nature, it comes to him like some miraculous gift on a hill or down or wide open heath.”—W. H. HUDSON.<sup>2</sup>

“I would rather pay £5 than pull up that hill again.”—CAMPER’S REMARK.

#### I

THERE is a peculiar delight in trek-cart camping. I am not sure that everyone would agree with me, or that I can explain my feeling in a convincing way. In the first place, the cart itself is a satisfying thing. Strong yet light, economically built in part out of the poles which uphold the

<sup>1</sup> *A Thousand Miles in the Rob Roy Canoe.*

<sup>2</sup> *Hampshire Days.*



tent, it is able when judiciously packed and roped to go almost anywhere. The highway, the mountain track, the tussocks and uneven surfaces of the moor, the boulders of the ford, are all negotiable by the trek-cart, if there is resolution at the handle-bars. Then the labour of pulling, though at times exacting, is invigorating. It is always a cheerful moment when you lift the shafts, or throw the sling over your shoulder, pull out from the vacant pitch, and take the road for the day's journey. Everything you need is in the cart behind you; and you bend forward to your work without encumbrance. Sometimes you will move briskly along the level or a gentle descent; at other times you will be straining hard as you toil up the hills, or as you hold the rope behind the cart in a steep drop, throwing your weight backward. At midday you unpack a bag, and lunch in some sheltered or shaded spot beside a stream. Then once more you take the road. About five o'clock you begin to look about for

a pitch. At last it is found, and you drag the cart, bumping and creaking, over the moorland until you reach it. Then with all speed you unload; the tent is soon up, and without an instant's delay tea is made. After a hard trek, which has brought into play every muscle of the body, tea is a divine meal. The journey may not have been long, perhaps only three or four miles, rarely more than ten. But pace and distance are no object. You have come perhaps over fords which no motor could have tackled, and over ground where no cyclist could have ridden. You have gone further into the fastnesses of the hills; there is no village for miles around, and no house within sight. Every turn and crest of the way has unfolded new prospects; and though your mileage may seem contemptible, your day's trek has been full of incident and pleasure.

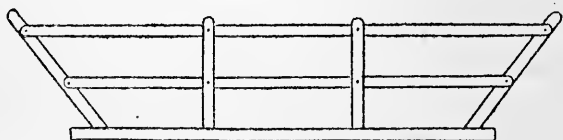
A trek-cart can be constructed in various ways. The chief conditions to be satisfied are these: (*a*) The cart must be strong throughout; wheels, axle, shafts, and plat-

form (*i.e.* the floor on which the load rests). The loaded cart will be subjected to violent jolts and strains, and there must be no risk of a breakdown when the camper may be miles from the nearest smithy or carpenter's shop. For this reason, stout wooden wheels of the best quality, with iron tyres and a strong iron axle, are the most trustworthy.<sup>1</sup> The wheels should be about 30 or 32 inches in diameter. (b) The cart must be so made that it can easily be taken to pieces for transport by rail. (c) The platform should be enclosed by a light but firmly fixed framework at the sides and ends in order to facilitate loading, and to prevent the load from lurching over and being chafed by the wheels. (d) The shafts and handle-bar should be so arranged that two persons can pull comfortably, while a third can pull ahead of them in a webbing sling fastened

<sup>1</sup> Wheels of the cycle type, with pneumatic tyres, are recommended by a writer in the *Handbook of Light-Weight Camping* (p. 138). I agree that such wheels would run delightfully over smooth surfaces, but in the sort of country described in the following narratives I doubt if they would last a day.

to a rope, the other end of which is tied to the axle.

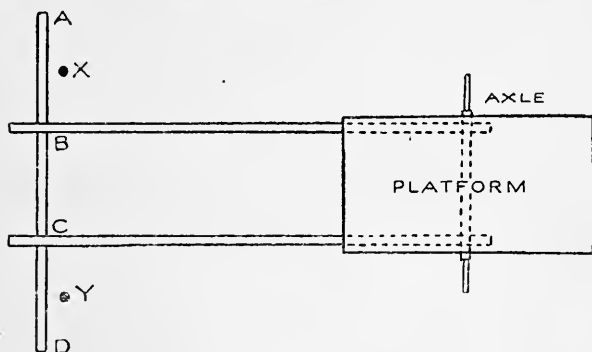
A convenient size for the platform is about 45 inches by 26 inches, the exact width depending on the length of the axle between the collars. The platform must be strong lengthwise so that the extremities will not sag under the load. The side-frames can be shaped thus:



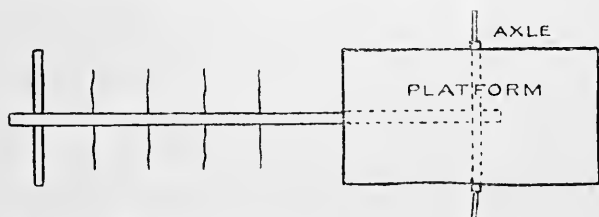
Each side-frame should be detachable as one whole, so that the two frames can be packed flat together. The ends of the cart will be sufficiently closed by two or three bars of hard wood, passing through holes in the side-frames and held in place by wire pins.

The shafting can be arranged in two ways. (1) Two stout ash poles, which should also do duty as tent poles, can be attached by bolts and straps to the sides of

the platform, and connected at their outer ends by a cross-bar, thus :



Each of the projections, BA and CD, should be 2 feet long, or nearly, so that the two pullers, whose positions will be at X and Y, may have plenty of room. (2) Another plan is to attach a single and stouter shaft to the platform, thus :



The advantage of this form of shafting is

that the pullers are brought nearer to the middle of the road; and, usually, this means better going underfoot. Strings or straps can be fixed permanently to the shaft at intervals of a few inches; and, when trekking, tent poles, fishing-rods, etc. can be made fast to it.

Light carriage bolts with wing nuts will be chiefly used in fixing together those parts of the cart which are detachable. If straps are required for lashing, the woven variety of cycle-strap (largest size) with the patent brass buckle, which grips at any point, are much superior to the ordinary leather strap and buckle. For the sake of lightness, the platform can be an open framework of oak or ash bars, but in this case a folded ground-sheet, or other stout canvas, must be laid upon it before loading. The load will require roping, and therefore staples or screw-eyes must be attached to all the outer edges of the platform. Long pieces of stout webbing with an eyelet and cord at each end are better than ropes for holding canvas sacks and tent rolls in position.

A waterproof cover should be tied over the load. Oilskins, lunch bag, spare ropes, etc. can be attached to a lashing tied over the cover. In loading the cart, care should be taken to place the main weight directly over the axle, and to secure a fore-and-aft balance. No brake is necessary. When descending a steep pitch, the rope and sling should be passed underneath the cart, and one of the party, or two if necessary, should "tail on" behind. This will effectively check the tendency of the cart to take command. The shafts of a loaded cart must be lifted and lowered gently, or they may snap under the sudden strain.

Carts can be designed to suit any kind of purpose. The smallest of mine is made of two old aeroplane wheels of strong construction, with stout pneumatic tyres, a length of piping for axle, ash rake-handles for shafts, and a very light platform with a canvas bottom and no sides. This cart runs easily and quietly, can carry light equipment for two persons, makes nothing of uneven ground, and is equal to any-

thing except, perhaps, a bad surface of sharp stones. It has proved very useful as an adjunct to a stationary camp, carrying luggage to and from the station, and a ten foot wooden boat for a journey of several miles.

## II

I close this chapter by giving short accounts of four trek-cart expeditions, two in the upper valley of the Towy in South Wales, the third along the Berkshire Downs, and the fourth in the Black Mountains.

### (i) *Through the Carmarthenshire Hills at Easter*

“Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages.”—CHAUCER.

The first of these expeditions was a trial trip which took place at Easter. Starting from Llandovery with one companion, my plan was to push up the beautiful valley of the Towy, cross a watershed rising to nearly 1,600 feet, and drop down about 1,000 feet to Tregaron on the western slope of the hills. The distance altogether would be about thirty miles, over roads for the



most part of the roughest description, across many fords, and up and down some of the steepest pitches in Wales. After the first eight or nine miles, there are no villages, and no habitations except a few lonely farmhouses. It was, therefore, necessary to carry an ample supply of food and stores, especially since our progress was to be leisurely, and we were to fish the rivers and also a llyn on the way. We carried a Whymper tent, 7 feet square, with a flysheet. The poles formed the shafts of the cart. We were not careful enough about weights, and the result was that our load was unnecessarily heavy. We had tough work with some of the ascents; more than once we had to unload, and make the climb twice over; and on two occasions we hired a horse. Though we were lucky in escaping snow, there was a good deal of rain, which did not improve the surface of the tracks.

We began with a trek of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles in order to put behind us the only village we should pass on the route, and gain the edge

of the great tangle of hills through which the Towy cuts its way. The note of this first day says :

“The trek-cart was not light, but it went quite well on a reasonable road. There are many hills, and here we had stiff work. Also the roads in long stretches were heavy, and had been recently mended with rough stones. This greatly added to the labour. . . . The two water-splashes made us a little wet. . . . All the last part of the way it rained, though not heavily. But, as soon as we got in, it settled down to a stiff sou’wester, heavy rain and wind. It was a nuisance pitching in the rain, but we did it quickly. It was a very rough night.”

We had intended to stay here only two nights, but the rain was so persistent that we stayed four. We fished, without much luck; and made ourselves comfortable in the tent.

“Our field is full of sheep and lambs: and the birds sing all day. It has not so far been at all cold. The Whymper is very comfortable, and all we want is a spell of dry weather. But shall we get it?”

Rain continued, until we had had nearly forty hours of it with scarcely any intermission. We replenished our supplies at

the village shop. At last, on the afternoon of Easter Monday, it cleared a little, and we were able to make a start. Several bad hills were in front of us, and partly for this reason and partly to make up for lost time, we borrowed a horse.

“Tom harnessed his small horse—‘Captain’—with a chain to the axle. The shafts were now at the rear, and D. and I held the handle-bar and guided the cart, while ‘Captain’ with Tom on his back did the pulling. It was not so easy as it sounds. The roads were in an appalling state after the rain, and we had hard work to keep out of ruts, and avoid stones and boulders. Going up hill, the handle-bars naturally dropped, and the position was rather trying: going down hill we had to act as brakes. So that we had some hardish work, and got very hot. The Ystradffin water-splash was deep, and owing to the cart bumping heavily over a stone, I nearly fell full length, and though I saved myself, I got rather wet. . . . It says something for our packing, that despite all lurches and bumps not a thing shifted.”

“Captain” and his master left us at the top of the last hill, where the track plunges steeply down through a wood to the meet-

ing place of the Camddwr and the Towy. Here we hoped to find a good pitch. The last part of this descent was so abrupt that we could only manage a few yards at a time.

“Just by the roadside, between road and river, was a little green level, backed by thick bushes, and commanding a lovely upstream view. Nothing could be better. We started to pitch at once, and worked hard and fast. The weather was improving; much blue sky and no wind. As soon as the tent was up, and the things inside, I opened the locker and made tea. Good it was. After that, we went upstream for about a quarter of a mile, and duly admired the beauty of this solitude. Just above us, the Towy comes plunging out of its rocky and woody gorge. The Camddwr issues from a deep cleft which is hidden from view, and both meet in lovely runs and pools in a green strath just by us. A brook also runs in on our side. A perfect spot: and the tent looks really romantic in such a setting. To-morrow, if only it is fine, we ought to have pleasant rest and good fishing.”

We stayed here two days in much content. It was on the second morning that we saw the marvellous picture of hoar-frost, mist, sun-

shine, and blue sky to which a reference has already been made.<sup>1</sup> That day we resumed our journey.

“The first job was a portage. Fifty yards along our road, a brook came down and made a water-splash. There was only a footbridge. After the brook came a short rise of 30 yards. So we carried all our stuff to the top of this rise, and towed the cart across with a rope. Then we loaded up and started.”

The road undulated, mounting high upon the shoulder of the hillside. Once or twice it was necessary partially to unload the cart. Further on, we persuaded a farmer and his son to help us up a lane of discouraging aspect.

“He offered a horse, but as his horse appeared to be of uncertain temper, by his account of him. I declined. We could easily have a disastrous smash-up. At the farmhouse we bought eggs, and said goodbye to the farmer. The son went on with us a little further, to help us up another hill and over a water-splash. . . . He was a good soul, and pulled like a cart-horse.”

After this point, the road though seldom

<sup>1</sup> Chapter I.

easy, became less trying. At one of the worst bits, a shepherd happened to pass, and he kindly gave a helpful shove behind. The scenery was now changing. We had left the narrow and precipitous gorges, and had entered upon a broad, hilly moorland. There were now no trees, and the river ran through an open valley, bare and wild, beautiful in its order, but needing a happy sunlight to look its best. We passed through some miles of this country before we could find a camping pitch with any shelter, and on level but not boggy ground.

“At last we came to a point where a stream came down in falls from the crags on our right, and, crossing the road, passed by the ruins of a cottage. Here there was a sort of square enclosure, very ancient, with a broad and fairly high bank to the southward. An angle of this enclosure, though not quite level, offered fair shelter. We managed to get the cart into the enclosure through a narrow break in the rampart. The weather did not look good. We pitched the tent as securely as we could, using extra guys; for a storm here would be severely felt.”

The fishing here was better than lower

down, and though a cold northerly wind blew, the weather improved next day. In the afternoon I called at a farmhouse.

"I waded over the river and was heralded by barking collies. Here were a pleasant girl and her mother. They willingly agreed to supply me with what they could; and just then a son came in with more dogs. He was most friendly and hospitable, and made me come in and sit down in the kitchen. It was a beautiful kitchen, large and stone-flagged; great sides of bacon hung from the ceiling. There was a fine old tall clock, a great oak chest, some old brass, and a jolly corner with a settle by the peat fire. They pressed me to have tea, but I had only lately lunched and wanted to fish. I was allowed to pay for the eggs, but for the milk and potatoes they flatly refused to take anything. We had a pleasant talk, though the old lady had little English. . . . I have not often been treated with more ready or more natural hospitality."

This farm was about sixteen miles from Llandovery, and about half that distance from any village. In every direction, the roads were merely tracks, often fording rivers, and climbing and descending steep and lofty hills bare of all shelter.

Next day we pushed on to the ford

where the hill road from Tregaron to Aber-gwesyn crossed our own. Here we waded over the Towy and left its valley, camping that night in a nook among the rocks on the hillside. We stayed here two nights. During the first night much rain fell and the river rose rapidly. When it cleared next morning, I found the fish eager for the fly. My bag that day was thirty-two, many of them fair-sized fish for a Welsh mountain stream.

“I had sport almost the whole time, and again and again caught fish in successive casts over observed rises. Once I got a fish on each fly. The flies used were March Brown, February Red, and Blue-Dun.”

Half this basket of trout went as a present to the farm where I had met with kindness, and which was still within a walk of the camp.

The most formidable part of the route was now before us. We had to cross the hilly watershed between the Towy and the Camddwr, and again climb out of the Camddwr cleft over the highest ground of



all, reaching 1,577 feet. After surveying a good part of this mountain road the day before, we decided once more in favour of horse hire. Our friends at the farm agreed to help us.

“By 12, or just after, we were ready. Jones arrived punctually with a little brown Welsh mare, ‘Bess’ by name. She proved excellent for the work; strong and quiet, and with an easy gentle pace. Much of the road was very rough; the natural rock constantly protruded, and the rest was rough shale and stones, with here and there a heavy patch of mire. Only strong wheels and a strong axle could have survived the bumps and wrenches that happened in spite of all our care. We made good progress. It was hard work, pounding up the hills and down, holding the handle-bar and guiding the cart. I have never, I think, had to tackle such a four miles of up and down, or such rough tracks. We reached the last summit soon after 2. Here we saw Llyn Berwyn lying on our left among moors and bogs, and beautiful it looked on such a glorious day. Away in front and below was a noble gap in the great plateau of hills upon which we were standing. Through the gap, steeply walled by craggy slopes on either hand, we could see from our summit of nearly 1,600 feet our road wind-

ing down to Tregaron and into the pastoral country of the Vale of Teify: a great prospect."

From this point we ourselves pulled the cart down a long gradual descent, finally halting at a small farm, about three-quarters of a mile below Llyn Berwyn.

"On the left was another little stream, and a plot of good turf, protected from the north by a high stone wall. The stream came down a pretty dingle with a few trees about a ruined cottage. This looked a good place, and was not too far from the llyn."

In that llyn, I had on this occasion some of the best trout-fishing which has ever fallen to my lot. My first visit was a short one on the evening of our arrival:

"A nice breeze was blowing. At the second cast I had a boiling rise. Just as sunset came, I caught in quick succession two beautiful trout, half a pound and three quarters."

Next day was bitterly cold, with a strong easterly wind. In the afternoon

"I got two fish, again half a pound and three-quarters. After tea, I had noble sport. I got three fine trout, one of a pound and a half and the others about three-quarters of a pound.

hooked and lost two others. My basket was five superb trout; all fat, thick, and splendidly marked.<sup>1</sup> Then homeward: the hills looked grey and cheerless; the tent, once inside it, a haven in contrast."

Next day, we walked into Tregaron for supplies, and found there a telegram calling us home on urgent business. We returned to strike the tent, and accomplished our last trek over a road mostly downhill, but in execrable condition owing to the trampling of innumerable sheep, and the passage of timber carts.

This first expedition with a trek-cart revealed the great possibilities of this kind of camping, and also taught many valuable lessons. Of these, the most important was about weight. The log-book says:

"We have too much weight. We have come through very well, but the work has been

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Bradley says that Llyn Berwyn "contains a fair stock of good trout, but of such reticent habit that they are expected to take the fly about one day only in the month." (*Clear Waters*, p. 210.) I can bear out this statement. I have paid many visits to this llyn, since my first recorded above, both in the spring and in the summer, and I have invariably found the trout only too reticent.

too severe in a hilly country of this kind, and in really bad places we have been dependent on horse hire, unless we did double journeys, which would have made the work tedious as well as hard, and would not always have got us to a suitable pitch in time. Our present load would be hopeless in hot weather. It could be greatly reduced. We did not take the question seriously enough. After the rigid economy of cycle-camping weights, I suffered a reaction, and thought that extras and superfluities would not matter. But they do, every one of them. It is detail, down to ounces, which tells, and offers scope for careful planning. We have too many clothes, too much food, too many books, too many heavy trifles in the locker, too much fishing gear, and the like."

(ii) *Along the Berkshire Downs at Whitsuntide*

"That was a fine saying of Lord Herbert of Cherbury that a man mounted on a good horse is lifted above himself; one experiences the feeling in a greater degree on any chalk down."—W. H. HUDSON.<sup>1</sup>

"O bold majestic downs, smooth, fair, and lonely;  
O still solitude, only matched in the skies:  
Perilous in steep places,  
Soft in the level races,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hampshire Days.*

Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies ;  
With lovely undulations of fall and rise ;  
    Entrenched with thickets thorned,  
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned."

—ROBERT BRIDGES.

Profiting by the lessons of the Easter trip, I designed and made a lighter cart. The wheels and axle were strong, but a little smaller and a good deal lighter than those of the first cart. The platform was also lighter and smaller, and partly made of tightly-laced canvas. For the heavy Whymper and fly-sheet, a tent of thin canvas with a light fly was substituted. Its poles acted as shafts. The cooking equipment was also modified, and a more jealous attention was paid to "superfluities." With the revised equipment, my wife and I made a camping tour of five days at Whitsuntide along the Ridge Way, the old grassy track which runs along the top of the Berkshire Downs. This holiday will always be remembered by us for its superb weather. Not a drop of rain fell ; hardly a cloud was ever seen ; and the moonlit nights were as magnificent as the days.

We went by train to a village station, taking all the equipment with us. The cart was then put together and loaded. Two miles of white and dusty road had to be traversed before we reached the Way and the solitude of the downs. The cart ran easily enough, but there were some ascents, and the heat was great. We passed along the Fair Mile, by the old Roman station of Lowbury Hill, and finally pitched the tent within sight of that hill, on the edge of a little wood of firs, with many gorse bushes and hawthorns in brilliant blossom.

“We are snugly protected to the south and west by thickets; we hear the breeze sighing in the firs behind us; it sounds like a gently breaking sea. . . . Larks sing always: lapwings call and wheel: wood pigeons croon in the firs; and as I write I hear the sound of a distant colony of rooks.”

Here, first, we experienced the difficulty of getting water. On the downs there are no streams, and hardly any ponds. It is their great drawback from the camper's point of view. One has to rely entirely

upon the farms, and the farms are few, and they seldom have much water to spare. The farm to which I now went was half a mile away. Water was very scarce, and every drop except rain water, now nearly exhausted, had to be carried from the nearest village. I paid a shilling for a little drinking-water, and a bucket of rain-water. With this I returned across the green slope, dotted with cowslips and milk-wort.

“The night was absolutely still. We tied back the curtains, and just pegged down the bottom skirting of each door, leaving a window a yard square. It was most restful to lie between waking and sleeping in the perfect stillness and freshness. I woke early. Four stable-boys were parading the downs, giving walking exercise to racehorses. They seemed interested in the tent, but said nothing beyond a civil good day.”

We read and wrote all the morning, and delayed our start till the heat of the day should be over. We carried with us every drop of surplus water. On our way I called at a farm for more.

“Here in the shadow of a barn archway was a curious sight. Three women who, as I saw from their brown Red Indian faces and black, wiry hair, were gipsies, were lying and sitting in the shade with three or four babies sprawling on the ground. One of the women was sewing. An old man, with little on except a very ragged shirt and trousers, was also one of the party. I asked if I could have water, and was at once met with the almost over-ready civility which is so common in gipsies. A gipsy sees more of the world than ordinary folk, has a quick mind, and knows how to talk to strangers. The old man drew me excellently cold water from a deep well. A table was set out in the yard with the remains of a meal. I can only suppose that these people were in charge, for the house was empty. They seemed quite at home, and, according to their wont, they seemed to have nothing to do except to enjoy the fine weather, sit in the shade, and gossip. On my way back I passed another squaw carrying a baby on her back.”

We were now on the Ridge Way proper. At its best, it affords perfect walking at this season of the year: smooth, springy turf of fine quality, gay with flowerets.

“We had gained the crest, and a long ribbon



of gently falling track was before us. I now took the cart single-handed, and went on at a great pace. Away on our right was a glorious view northwards over the White Horse Vale. On the left in a hollow was some woodland: oaks, with a thick undergrowth."

Here we found a pitch in a little indentation of the thickets. After supper

"We walked up to the Ridge to see the lovely glow in the west. Night-jars were whirring, and the moon was brilliant through the trees behind us. Again the night was profoundly still."

Next day was very hot, and we again delayed our trek till after tea. The gradients were still against us, and on our way we passed over the 600-feet contour. In places there was long grass which added to the labour of pulling. We passed Scutchamore (or Cuckamsley) Knob. Some way beyond this, we halted at a farm near a wood. We obtained leave to pitch the tent under the lee of the wood, and for once we enjoyed the boon of a plentiful supply of good water.

"At evening, the sunset colouring was lovely

beyond words. It paled into many shades till at last in the east it vanished in the gathering curtain of night. Seldom does one see over a vast spread of land such a solemnly peaceful close of day. Then we came back from the Ridge. The moon twinkled through the big trees beside the tent. There was a little breeze: a few cries of birds: a rustling of rabbits in the scrub."

On the following day we pushed on for several miles. The Way undulates, but keeps to the high ground, and everywhere commands magnificent prospects. We passed the bold ramparts of Letcombe Castle. Towards seven o'clock we began to look for a pitch, and for the first time had trouble in finding one to our mind. In the end, we camped at the side of the Ridge Way itself.

"There was a noble moon in a clear sky with stars. A cool wind sprang up, but nothing to trouble the tent. At supper C. suggested that we should get up very early and do our trek before the sun became powerful. Accordingly, we were up before 5 (summer time). It was decidedly cool, but the early morning was divine."

That day we made a long trek, which, contrary to our original plan, prolonged itself to midday, so that we did not escape the heat. We passed along the most famous part of the downs; above the Blowing Stone and by Uffington Camp and the White Horse.

“The way was in many parts rough and rutty, and the ground hard and bumpy. Consequently we had trouble with the load, which was jolted out of position, and sometimes began to chafe the wheels.”

The platform of this cart, like that of its predecessor, had no sides; and the absence of sides adds much to the difficulty of packing, and to the risk of the load becoming displaced when trekking over uneven ground. We left the Ridge Way at Uffington Camp, and descended to the valley by the steep road which winds between the White Horse and the Manger.

“Near Uffington Camp we passed above the 800-foot contour, and we must have reached about 820 or 830. From this we came down in about a mile or less to between 400 and 500.

When we got to the smooth, white road, we had hard work to hold the cart."

Odd as it may seem, we had not yet hit upon the simple and obvious device of checking the cart on a down gradient by putting one person behind it to hold it back with a rope.

We had hoped to find our last pitch somewhere on the lower slopes of the open down, but nothing offered itself. In the end we found ourselves, very hot and rather tired, at an old and very picturesque farm, which seemed to be deserted.

"It lies in a bosky little combe, and inside the enclosure is a charming and rather derelict old orchard, shady and retired, and walled in on three sides by the steep wooded banks of the combe. There were many lovely trees and abundant may blossom. After a long wait, I found a man in charge who at once gave us leave to camp. So we pulled in and soon had the tent up in this ancient woody place, the haunt of numberless birds, songsters and others. Then came tea. Never do I remember such perfect weather. The air is fresh, yet warm. It is only when one has to work hard in the blazing sun that one feels too hot. One of the

blessings of this place is a plentiful and handy supply of cold pure water."

That night the nightingale sang to us. We left on the afternoon of the next day, and came home by train. Our trek altogether was just under 30 miles. Just before we struck the tent, we heard the roll of thunder. After we had reached home, there was a grand display of distant lightning, much thunder, and some rain and wind.

(iii) *Carmarthenshire in August.*

"To travel on day by day, stopping only at inclination, and moving as energy prompts, is to discover strange and incommunicable things."—R. A. SCOTT-JAMES.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the two expeditions already described led to the undertaking of a third on a larger scale. The month chosen was August; the party consisted of my wife, our four sons, and myself; and both carts were employed. We carried a Dome tent of 10 ft. 6 ins. in diameter, the light tent used on the Berkshire Downs, and one or

<sup>1</sup> *An Englishman in Ireland.*

two smaller ones. The route, with one variation, was the reverse of that taken in the first Easter trip. We were to start from Tregaron, spend some time at the old camping site below Llyn Berwyn, and then cross the hills to the Camddwr valley. Instead of at once crossing the next range of hills to the Towy, we were to go down the Camddwr valley for some miles, and then gain the Towy valley by an easier road. For the most part, therefore, we should be travelling over ground already familiar to myself.

An advance party of three made the first stage of four miles from Tregaron with a heavily laden cart. In this journey we had to climb 600 feet. The log-book says :

“ We managed all the moderate hills fairly well, but the half-way hill and the final ascents were up to the very limit of our strength. Two or three times we very nearly stuck, and often we could only make a few yards or even feet at a time. The work was too heavy, but at present I see no remedy. Of course, if all six of us had been there, we could have got up fairly well ; but then we should have had two carts, and

have had to make double journeys. It was hot work, but there was a jolly wind behind us, and showers to refresh us. The road was very stony and muddy."

We camped here for some time. I spent many hours daily reading and writing, and though the llyn fishing proved a fiasco, the unbroken quiet and the beauty of this lonely place more than compensated. I particularly recall some of the evenings I spent at the llyn side. Llyn Berwyn is a fine sheet of water enclosed by low green hills. The solitude is complete; in all my many visits there I never saw any person except, very rarely, a mounted shepherd in the distance. Here is a note of a memorable sunset:

"It fell calm. The scene was exquisite. The sky was clear except for a few wisps of cloud: the sunset fine and auspicious. The llyn lay like lustrous glass amid the quiet hills, some in shadow, others aglow with the evening light. Trout rose here and there, making faint dimples upon the surface. I stayed some while, entranced by the beauty of it all. If ever I saw 'a beauteous evening, calm and free,' or knew 'a holy time, as quiet as a nun,' it was then.

A bird called : sheep bleated far away : all else was still."

And again :

"The sunset was one of the finest. A perfectly clear sky save for a few gorgeous and emphatic strips in the west. As I reached the summit on the way home, the sun sank into the Tregaron gap in a blaze of glory. Most perfectly settled and serene. The moon was just setting : the breeze had died away. It was a pageant to remember."

At length, we tore ourselves away from this haven of peace which a mounted postman visits only twice a week. We laid in supplies and stores for seven or eight days, no mean weight in itself :

"Lunch over we began to load up. We had more stuff than was reasonable for the carts, and I was anxious about the shafts which bent under the strain. We settled the main weights, as far as we could, over the axles. Balance is very important in this business. Then we started. The loads were heavy, but pulling them was not the difficulty, though it was strenuous work. The road in places was atrocious, nothing but loose and biggish stones, more like the bed of a torrent than a road. This jolted the loads, and first and last we had much trouble. The big



sacks would shift and get over the wheels.<sup>1</sup> Cords were cut through, and we should have cut the bags as well had we not been very watchful. Every resettlement of the loads meant casting off and making fast again the whole set of cords. This was trying work, and it happened often, so that at first our progress was exasperatingly slow. Then came two fords. C., R., and I got very wet in pulling the carts through. The others fared better, as they could pick their crossing places. Then came a short but very steep ascent. Here we put all hands to each cart, and came up at a run, which was cheering. Finally, we persuaded the loads to behave better. We had learned by this time some useful lessons about loading. The weather now turned very wet. Another deep ford had to be crossed, but after this we made good progress."

After halting for two days in the very heart of these extensive hills, we resumed our journey :

" A stiff bit of work was before us. We were to climb and cross the divide between the

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<sup>1</sup>The platforms of these carts, as already mentioned, had only makeshift sides enclosing them. It was this experience which showed the expediency of devising strong frameworks at the sides and ends of the platform to prevent chafing the wheels and displacements of the load.

Camddwr and the Towy. We had camped at about 1,000 feet, or a little lower, and the top of the divide is 1,281. So there was an ascent of 300 feet. The road on the near side of the hill was pretty fair. There were some steep pitches, especially at the last; and at these we put on extra strength to each cart. This slows down the pace, as it means double journeys; but it is the best method, and often the only possible one, of getting on. The descent to the Towy was abrupt in many places, and very rough. We tried the new drag-shoes, and found them useless. One has to drag the cart downhill, which is absurd; and they tend to pull the cart awry, and strain the frames and shafts. So we abandoned the shoes. Instead, we passed the rope and sling under the carts, and one or two of us hung on behind. This was most effective; and finally settled that particular problem. The ford at the Towy is a lovely spot. Here we lunched. Then we crossed over, and started down the Towy road. This is pretty fair just here, but there are rough bits, and many sharp pitches, as it climbs and descends the angles of the ravine. The scenery is charming."

After a halt of two or three days near our old camping site at the junction of the Camddwr and the Towy, the trek was continued.

“ We crossed the water-splash. The terrible hill of Trawsnant was before us. The lower bit of this is most severe. The six of us, however, got the big cart up, and five of us pulled up the other. This is a long hill, and we had to take it in several spells. There was only one short bit where we could pull the carts with single teams. It really was no mean performance to get up this hill.”

Some miles further on, the main expedition ended. Three of us, however, with the smaller cart and two light tents, made a longer and more rapid tour of nearly 60 miles, finishing in the Usk valley, two nights being spent near the source of the Usk on Carmarthen Van. That camping site, more than 1,100 feet up the slopes, is remembered as perhaps the most delightful of all. After a spell of threatening weather :

“ It cleared up marvellously, and became one of the loveliest evenings. The atmosphere was brilliantly clear, and the great hill which I had seen vaguely through the clouds this morning stood out sharply as Carmarthen Van; a nobly shaped bastion with scarped sides. I went slowly down the river, fishing now and then.

I saw no one but a shepherd far away. Then back. The sun set in a clear sky, and the west was bright for long. Then the stars came out, and the mountain could still be seen by their light. There was no breath of wind; the air keen, and the dew falling. Of all our camping sites of late, this is the one we like best. At first sight, the great expanse of upland seems a little tame. But the thin line of distant trees on the ridges, the little Usk running down its ravine, the dominating hill-top behind, the absolute quiet, the running water at the tent side, the little greens, and the heather, make a perfect harmony. It is the right place for campers; and this means something in itself."

(iv) *The Black Mountains in December.*

"No enemy, but winter and rough weather."—SHAKESPEARE.

I had often wanted to try a winter camp, and in December, 1919, I decided to do it. The objection to a winter camp is not the cold. There is no colder weather than that which often comes in March, and that has never troubled us. The things which have deterred me from camping at mid-winter are, first, that there is no trout-fishing then, and, secondly, that the days are so short.

This year, however, I resolved to give December a trial, and to go alone. Indeed, I doubt if I could have persuaded anyone to come with me. In order to fill up the day-time, I decided to trek; and to rely on good literature to pass the long evenings.

I took the smallest of the carts: the one with a light wood and canvas platform and aeroplane wheels. Ash shafts were fitted, and these would convert into tent poles. The platform when detached could be propped against a pole and serve as a back-rest. A new tent of heavy, ten ounce cotton canvas was made. I was unable to get the excellent khaki-drill, but this new material seemed good. The tent was 4 ft. 6 ins. high, 6 ft. 6 ins. long, and A-shaped. It pegged down very securely with wooden and metal pegs. The guys, three at each end, were telephone cable in order to obviate shrinking in wet weather. A piece of cable served as a ridge line. I made all for strength, and I do not think a hurricane would affect this stout little tent. I took a Primus;

plenty of oil; food for a week; and, generally, a liberal outfit, including plenty of warm wraps. The load was heavy, heavier than was necessary or desirable as I found under trial, but I knew I might be glad of these comforts during the long hours of inaction after daylight.

The poles and axle were packed in a canvas case so that they looked like large fishing-rods. The wheels, etc. were wrapped in groundsheets, and the whole kit went by train as ordinary luggage. For the platform I took a hammock-chair ticket.

The starting-point was Hay. Here at the inn I had the good fortune to meet excellent company, and made, I hope, a lasting friend.

*Dec. 13, 5.30 p.m. In camp on the way from Hay to Michaelchurch.*—To-day the weather was at first fair and mild. I bought supplies in Hay; had my luggage brought to the inn-yard; put the cart together, and loaded up. By 11.30 I was off. The load was heavy, but not

quite so bad as I expected. Roads were muddy and nearly always uphill.

So far as I had a plan, it was to go through the pass between Hay Bluff and Lord Hereford's Knob, and then to go down the Honddhu valley past Llanthony Abbey. I knew that I might not be able to manage the pass, and, as it happened, I went wrong at the outset, and presently found myself on the Michaelchurch road. When I discovered this, I considered that this road was bad enough and steep enough to satisfy me, and I resolved to stick to it. It went steadily uphill. At one long pitch I was able to get a boy to help me. About 12.45 I came to a severe ascent. I did half of it and then had lunch. A woman on horseback came by, and I had to lead the horse past the cart. Horses nearly always shy at trek-carts. Then on again: stiff going. About 2 I came to a little stream, some possible sites, and a small farm. I was now, as it seemed, at the top of the long hill. The view backward was jolly. It

seemed best to camp here. Leave was at once granted, and I found a fair pitch close to a clear stream, and fairly sheltered by a hedge and the rising ground behind. No sooner was the tent up than rain began, and I had to bundle everything under cover. By degrees I got things into order, had tea, and made myself comfortable. The evening is stormy, but there is not much rain, and it is not cold. I have been reading and resting. Distance trekked, about three miles.

*Dec. 14, 5.40 p.m. In camp by the Michaelchurch road.*—Last night I found from the map that I had camped at about 750 feet. The first part of the night was rough and squally with, at least, one heavy rain-storm. The tent makes nothing of rough weather. I was perfectly warm. I lay awake some time, and then slept soundly. Up at 8.30: a fine morning. Down in the valleys mist was floating about.

I started about 12. I found I was by no means at the top of the hill, and for an



hour I had stiff work. A fine rain began to fall, and there was some mist. The road was a solitude. A strongish wind blew from the west. At 1 I lunched under the shelter of a wall. The views were charming. The big hedges were flushed with red berries. Then on again. At last, at 1,402 feet, I gained the summit of this long hill. The road began to drop, and I looked around for a site. The first scouting led to nothing. I was on very high ground, and shelter of some kind was indispensable. I went on and found a stream and a farm at the head of the valley. Here I got leave to camp, and after some searching found a tolerable pitch under a hedge. It takes an hour to get all things ready for tea. A little girl brought me some drinking-water, and I filled the bucket at the stream. Then tea, for which I was very ready. It blows and rains now and then, but the tent is sheltered from the wind, and I am very comfortable.

*Dec. 15, 5.30 p.m. In camp in a meadow at Michaelchurch.—Last night*

was very rough. The wind roared ceaselessly through a little plantation of larches just below. There was not much rain, but my canvas began to drip slightly. This ought not to happen, and is very annoying, though the drip was nothing serious. I took a thin groundsheet, used to cover the loaded cart, and tied it down over the tent. Luckily it was large enough to do the trick. About midnight this sheet began to flap in the wind so I had to turn out and muzzle it. Violent as the wind then was, the tent got little of it. The roar in the trees, however, was loud enough to keep me awake for some time.

When I turned out at 8, the weather was vile, and it has remained so. A thick mist covered the hills, bringing rain, sometimes light and sometimes heavy. There was less wind. After taking stock of the prospect, I decided to move. Anything rather than lie in the tent all day in weather like this. I packed up with every care to keep things dry, but dryness as regards the exterior of bags and packages

became a relative term. Packing like this is a slow job, and it was noon before I started in pouring rain. The hill was now in my favour, except that during the trek there were many steep little rises as the road crossed dingles, in each of which was a swollen torrent of reddish water. I passed a paralysed traction engine drawn by eleven horses, and later on a postman; otherwise I had the road to myself. It was horribly muddy and wet. I kept fairly dry, but damp found its way through my oilskins to my shoulders and arms. On the whole I came through pretty well. I made good progress, and the day's trek was equal to the distance of the two previous treks taken together. I lunched by the roadside in the rain.

The weather grew worse as the day went on. At Michaelchurch I got leave to camp in a meadow by the river. In decent weather the site would have been delightful; but the rain was now coming down in torrents. I managed, nevertheless, to get the tent up, and to get all things under cover

without getting anything much wetter. Then I got drinking-water from a house, and washing-water from the river, and came inside for good. The rain was now slackening. I changed my clothes; had tea; and spent some time in drying my wet coat over the Primus. After a day like this, the dryness, snugness, and warmth of the tent are very welcome.

*Dec. 16, 5.30 p.m. In camp in a field near Pandy.*—A wonderful change in the weather. Last night rain continued till about 7.30. It then moderated, and when I turned in no rain was falling and the night was still. I had a light supper of bread and cheese and cocoa. It is curious how one seems instinctively to prefer the plainest foods in camp. I made myself very comfortable, carefully putting all wet things in harmless places. Towards dawn some animal woke me by scratching at the canvas. When I turned out at 7.45, it was fine. There had been a white frost, and the bucket and part of the tent were frozen stiff. It was jolly to be abroad in

fine weather again. Packing could now be done outside, and many wet things could be fairly dried. I started at 11.30. The roads had been washed clean, and I travelled fast. The road was now milestoned, and I found I was doing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles an hour. I passed Longtown before lunch. There is a steep descent just before this place, and I had to zig-zag to get down it. Lunch basking in the sun was a blessed change from yesterday when I had to crouch over my food to keep the rain off it. Then on again. I was now on lower ground, and the road surface degenerated. The country hereabouts is pretty. At Longtown I crossed the Monnow, and this river kept me company. Right ahead Skyrrid-fawr showed nobly. Altogether, an inspiriting day.

About 2.30 Pandy came in sight. I had done eight miles. I got leave to camp in a field just outside the village. There was a good pitch in a corner. I set up the tent very leisurely and continued the drying processes, hanging things on a hedge in the sun. Then a glorious rub-down, change, and tea over

a good book. What a contrast to yesterday! But such is campers' luck.

*Dec. 17, 5.30 p.m. Inn at Abergavenny.*  
—By supper time last night it was freezing hard. The wet tent became stiff and glittering with frost, and there was ice in the bucket outside. I had no trouble about keeping warm. For supper I thought I would try one of the big Spanish onions I bought at Hay. This makes a fine meal, but the amount of cooking it takes is serious. After  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours' boiling it was not properly cooked though it was very good. As the night promised to be severely cold, I filled the thermos with cocoa. Excellent it was at 2.30 a.m., though I woke up perfectly warm.

At 8 a.m. the weather had markedly changed. The frost was gone, the sky was full of bluish vapour, and the air mild. The weather looked unhealthy, and as I had had my full share of rain, I was not sorry that this was to be my last trek. About 12 I started on the old and unfrequented road which keeps west of Pandy

and the railway. After crossing the Honddhu at Llanvihangel Crucicorney there is a severe pitch before one gains the Hereford-Abergavenny road. I took it without a pause, and after this came four miles of gently falling gradient on a dull highroad. I lunched by the roadside. Blorenges was wreathed in cloud. Skyrrid-fawe, which had been my prospect for many a mile, was now behind me. After lunch I went on at four miles an hour. There was a little rain and a bad sky. I discovered, after some difficulty, Abergavenny Junction Station. Here I unloaded, and then packed the cart and nearly all my kit for transit by rail. This took about an hour. Soon after 4 I reached my inn, and this little expedition was over. I had had five days on the march, and four nights in camp. The total distance trekked was about 24 miles.

I enjoyed the experience, but trek-cart camping is more fitted to Easter and the summer than to the short days of December. In winter it tends to become monotonous as

well as rather hard work. One must keep moving during the daylight hours, and the result is that routine has too much sway. From the moment of turning out in the morning until tea is over at the next camp, one is ceaselessly busy getting meals, striking the tent, packing and loading, trekking, unloading and unpacking, pitching the tent, getting meals. The only free time is before and after supper. All this makes a hard day, and each day's work is too much a repetition of yesterday's. In all trek-cart camping, alternate days, or at least one day out of three, should be off days. But in winter it is not easy to manage this. One cannot lounge about; there is, for me, no fishing; and as a rule the tent cannot be left while one takes a long walk. On the whole, therefore, a stationary camp, on a good site which can be left without risk, seems best for winter.

My load could easily have been lighter without any loss of comforts or necessities. One little precaution served me well. I packed my down quilt, blanket, and pillow



in a small canvas sack by themselves, and then packed this sack in a larger one. This secured them from any possibility of getting wet, whatever the weather.

To keep oneself dry when walking in prolonged heavy rain, I believe the only specific is to protect the shoulders and arms with a light cape, in addition to the usual outfit of oilskin coat, thigh leggings, and ordinary leggings.

## XV

# ON FOOT AMONG WELSH HILLS

"How now, good fellow, whither away after this burdened manner?"—JOHN BUNYAN.<sup>1</sup>

"He told of changes of the season—the rigours of winter, the early flush of spring, the mellow joys of summer, and autumn with her pomp and decay. He told of clear starlit nights, when the hill breezes blow over the moors, and the birds wake the sleeper: of windy mornings, when the mist trails from the hills and dim clouds scud across the sky: of long hot days in the heather among the odours of thyme and bog-myrtle and the lark's clear song. Then he changed his tune, and spoke of the old romance of the wayside, that romance which gipsies and wanderers feel, of motion amid rest, of ease in the hurry of the seasons, of progress over the hills and far away, into that land unknown which dawns upon the sight with each new morrow."—JOHN BUCHAN.<sup>2</sup>

"Brook and road  
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,  
And with them did we journey several hours  
At a slow step."—WORDSWORTH.

IN 1920 I had a chance of putting pedestrian camping to a test. I had brought to our summer camp, near Llanbedr, equipment of the necessary lightness; the weather

<sup>1</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress.*

<sup>2</sup> *Scholar Gipsies.*

was settled, and suitable country was close by. My plan was to go alone, and to spend three days and two nights in going leisurely through the Pass of Ardudwy and round by the Roman Steps and Cwmbychan back to my starting-point. The distance would be about fifteen miles. The route passes through some of the wildest and finest scenery in Wales. Food would have to be carried, though I counted upon getting a meal at Cwmbychan Farm.

My load was divided into two portions, and was carried partly in the hand and partly on the back. The hand package was made up around the tent-poles, and was carried with a sling arranged like a rifle-sling. This is a good device. The weight of this package was 9 lbs. 15½ ozs. :

	lbs.	oz.
Tent, with guys (2)	2	10½
Poles (2)	1	0
Groundsheet	1	9
2 Burberry capes	4	4
Trout rod	0	8
	<hr/>	
	9	15½

## 222 HOLIDAYS IN TENTS

The rest of the load may be thus classified :

### (1) *Tent Supplementaries*—

	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.
About 30 wooden skewer pegs ; 2 main guy pegs (wood) ; 5 metal skewer pegs . . . . .	0	6		
Spare cord . . . . .	0	2		
	<hr/>		0	8

### (2) *Clothes*—

Undershirt . . . . .	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Woollen cardigan . . . . .	0	15		
Thick socks . . . . .	0	5		
Thin socks . . . . .	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Slippers . . . . .	1	0		
Handkerchief . . . . .	0	0 $\frac{3}{4}$		
	<hr/>		2	13 $\frac{3}{4}$

### (3) *Toilet*—

Thin canvas basin . . . . .	0	1		
Soap . . . . .	0	0 $\frac{3}{4}$		
Razor . . . . .	0	2		
Comb . . . . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Shaving brush . . . . .	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$		
Towel . . . . .	0	8		
Tooth brush, etc. . . . .	0	1		
	<hr/>		0	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Carry forward			4	4 $\frac{1}{4}$

# AMONG WELSH HILLS 223

	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.
Brought forward			4	4 $\frac{1}{4}$
(4) <i>Kitchen</i> —				
Aluminium cooking pans and handle . . . . .	0	10		
Knife . . . . .	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Fork, spoons (aluminium)	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$		
2 small aluminium plates	0	4		
Aluminium mug . . . . .	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$		
„ milk can . . . . .	0	6		
Thin canvas bucket . . . . .	0	2		
Clout . . . . .	0	2		
		—	1	14 $\frac{1}{4}$
(5) <i>Bedding</i> —				
Down quilt in bag . . . . .	2	0		
Small kapok pillow . . . . .	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$		
„ down „ . . . . .	0	3		
Circular hip cushion (air)	0	12		
Flat air cushion . . . . .	0	7		
		—	3	15 $\frac{1}{2}$
(6) <i>Various</i> —				
1 carriage candle . . . . .	0	2		
1 book . . . . .	0	6		
Writing paper . . . . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Dubbin and rubber . . . . .	0	3		
Fishing reel, casts, and flies . . . . .	0	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		
		—	1	4
Carry forward			11	6

	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.
Brought forward			11	6
(7) <i>Food</i> —				
Food included bread, tea, butter, sugar, salt, co- coa, tinned milk, cheese, eggs (3), marmalade, oatmeal, biscuits. I had no scales in camp. I estimate the weight at	5	0		
	<hr/>		5	0
(8) All articles in lists 1 to 7 were carried in a light groundsheet, fitted with straps and tapes. A bolster-shaped sack resulted. The sack travelled best when arranged in two parts, the division coming midway in the length. It could be changed from shoulder to shoulder, and in some ways was more com- fortable than a ruck- sack, which presses continuously on one part of the back. The groundsheet weighed				
			1	6
	<hr/>			
			1	6
Total			17	12
			<hr/>	

Thus the total load was :

	lbs.	ozs.
In the hand . . .	9	15½
On the back . . .	17	12
	<hr/>	
	27	11½
	<hr/>	

Sundries, such as silk scarf, knife, map, chocolate, matches, pipe, tobacco, mirror, compass, whistle, and fountain pen were carried in the pockets.

The record of this trip is as follows :

*August 29, 10 p.m. In camp at the western end of the Pass of Arduwy.*—I started to-day at 5.35 p.m. I found I could carry the load without discomfort, though fast walking would be impossible. Pace about 3 miles an hour, and two changes of the big pack per hour. After passing Maesgarnedd I looked about for a pitch. It was not easy to find one, as the ground was boggy and the shelter poor. At last I found a bit of dry turf in the angle made by a ruinous and deserted cow-house and a big stone wall. Here I am out of sight of the track up the pass. There are no cattle anywhere near. A jolly little stream runs past about 30 yards away. On my left are the towering heights and the screes and terraces of Rhinog Fawr, and

away across the valley the sharp outline of Rhinog Fach.

I set to work and put up the tent. Then I cut armfuls of rushes and dry bracken, and judiciously built up my bed. Over this I pegged down the two groundsheets. Then I gathered sticks, and this took time, for bushes were scarce. Supper was cocoa, bread and cheese, and biscuits. While I was having it in the dusk, the full moon rose grandly over Rhinog Fach. The night is beautiful: a haze upon the crests, dew falling, and the air very still. The only sound is that of little waters plashing down the mountain sides.

*Aug. 31, 10.40 a.m. In camp near Cwmbychan Farm.*—I reached this place last night after a magnificent and prosperous walk. On Sunday night I was long in falling asleep, simply owing to the change of couch—an absurd fad of mine. About 1.30 I got up and walked through the dew to the stream for a drink. It was a superb night, the great moon in a clear heaven, utterly still. I fell asleep after this, and did not wake finally till 8.20, rather too late. It was then misty, the mountains wreathed in vapour, the promise of another fine hot day. Breakfast took up too much time; these cooking-pots are too small to use with a stick-fire. The supporting stones have to be placed too near together. For an expedition like this one must either bring the little Primus, which means a percept-



ible addition to the load, or else broader and shallower vessels, and a miniature pair of bellows. Otherwise, the delay in getting hot food is tiresome, and in wet weather would be a real nuisance. For breakfast I had porridge and milk, egg, tea, bread, butter, and marmalade.

Working leisurely, I had packed up, and was ready for the road soon after 11. Then and all day it was hot without being too hot ; sometimes the sun was in cloud and there was a cool little breeze. My first two miles or so ascended the Pass of Ardudwy. This is a wild and grand rift between the two Rhinogs. On either side the slopes are craggy, boulder-strewn, and abrupt. There is no road : the path or track is of the roughest. Throughout the day the ascents and descents were so rough and stony as to require careful walking, especially with a heavy load. The top of the pass is 1,250 feet. Then I came out into the wide undulations of Trawsfynydd moor. The route now turns north, and for a mile or two the going was easier. I went rather too far eastward, and got off the track, but soon regained it. About one or soon after I saw on the mountain front on my left a biggish notch which I took to be the Bwlch Tyddiad which leads to the Roman Steps. At the foot of the notch I came to a stream. Here I halted for lunch, and made myself comfortable in the partial shade of a big rock. I bathed my feet in the stream, and dried boots and socks

(which had got wet in boggy places) in the sun. The scenery here was noble : behind me rose rank upon rank of mountain ridges dusky and purple in the haze, all their foreground coloured with fern and heath. In front was the wide moorland also heather-clad and rockstrewn. A huge dragon-fly flashed like a gaudy aeroplane as it went hawking to and fro along the stream. About 2.45 I began the ascent of the second pass. The top of it is about 1,500 feet, but as I lunched at about 1,250 the climb was nothing serious. From the summit there is a long descent to Cwmbychan Farm, much of it by the rude stairways known as the Roman Steps. These steps must have cost much labour, and are celebrated in guide-books, though they are not nearly so impressive in this way as the mighty stone walls of these parts which stride from crest to crest regardless of steepness and obstacles. The steps are tiring to walk upon as they are slippery, uneven, and irregular. The scenery in this pass is more confined than in the Ardudwy Pass, but it is very fine. Often the sides are sheer, always they are precipitous. Heather blooms wherever it can ; and the views downwards and upwards through the pass are marvellously diversified with all the elements of mountain wildness.

At lunch-time I rearranged my big pack. Till then I had divided it into three compartments. I now reduced these to two. I found

that I could thus balance it more easily upon either shoulder. The lower ends of the pack I strapped together, the strap passing loosely round my body. This kept the pack steady and in place.

Cwmbychan Farm was reached about 4.15. Here I had a jolly tea. After some looking about, I found a good camp site in the sheltered corner of a field just above the llyn, and about 120 yards from a stream. I pitched the tent, built a fireplace, gathered an ample supply of wood, and then went down to the llyn to fish. Trout are not supposed to rise to fly in this llyn, but as they don't rise anywhere just now, this want of taste on their part seemed immaterial. I went along the south shore of the llyn, and let myself in for a toilsome scramble over about half a mile of thickets and boulders. I went completely round the llyn and came back by the road. There was hardly any breeze, and there was nothing doing.

Then supper. I first made a roaring blaze with sticks, and then filled the fireplace with the glowing embers. I thus got the pot to boil in a reasonable time. The farmer came up and we had a pleasant talk. At 10 I turned in. The bed was comfortable and I slept well. The night was again fine. I was roused up by a sort of blow on the tent. I was up instantly, and found a horse just outside. I was about to drive him off, when a boy from the farm

saved me the trouble. The horse was evidently excited by the tent, and I think he must have pawed the canvas with his forefoot. I felt glad his experiments had gone no further.

It was now about 7.30. There was a heavy dew, no wind, and thick mist on the heights. The air was full of ferocious midges. Hundreds of these pests fell upon me whenever I put my head outside the tent. Never have I known them such a plague. To keep them off I lighted a pipe, and made haste to get the fire going. They vanished before long. Breakfast again took rather a long time to one accustomed to the speedy Primus. The sun is now breaking through the mist. It is time to pack and take the road.

*Sept. 1, 11 a.m. Home Camp.*—I left Cwmbychan about 12.30. I went to the farm to have milk and biscuits before leaving, and to thank them. The day was cooler than it has been of late. I left Llyn Cwmbychan with reluctance, for it makes a very lovely picture.

The first part of the road home was rough, but vastly smoother than the hill-tracks of the two previous days. At Cwm-yr-afon I crossed the bridge over the Artro and tried to make my way along the left bank. I had a notion of fishing as I went down the valley. Just here the river was too overgrown to allow this, and the going was also bad. I twice had to ford the river. I lunched at a pretty spot near

Crafnant Bridge. On the north side of the river a green way comes down through woods and rocks to the grey old bridge, which seems to be little used. Just by is a little glade of trees and smooth turf. Then the river, a belt of meadow, and beyond this the wooded and abrupt terraces of the mountain. Lower down I fished, and got two sprats. From Penybont I took the short cut up the steep hill, and so home in time for tea. It was hot work climbing the hill, and I was not sorry to lower my pack for the last time.

This trial trip satisfies me that pedestrian camping, single-handed, is quite feasible. It is well to choose the right kind of country for it, for in populous and settled districts the charm of the experience would vanish almost wholly, and the adventure would be out of tune with the environment. A hill country with farms here and there, and a village shop less often, is what is wanted.

The load I carried was manageable. The weight (27 lbs.  $11\frac{1}{2}$  ozs.) could have been reduced by leaving out a number of non-essentials. I was well aware of this, but the experiment would have been less useful if I had reduced weight to the barest minimum. I think that several pounds could be saved without any great sacrifice of comfort. Moreover, I carried most of my food in small tins. Weight could be saved and packing simplified

by using little bags of fine material. Bags weigh next to nothing, and they get smaller as the contents diminish.

It would be possible to carry a lighter tent, such as the "Itisa,"<sup>1</sup> which has only one pole. On the other hand, the tent I carried was comfortable; it stands firmly, and on other occasions it has withstood heavy rain successfully. I am not in favour of achieving lightness at the cost of weather-resisting properties. A pedestrian camper who goes into the hills cannot always be sure of getting sheltered pitches.

Waterproofs are another problem. I carried two light Burberry capes. One was intended for the shoulders, and the other was to be worn round the waist, reaching to below the top of the leggings. But a cape is an awkward garment to wear when pitching or striking tents, or when doing anything with the hands. It makes a useful covering at night, but in summer this additional wrap is seldom wanted. A long coat of light oilskin, or an ordinary mackintosh, will not suffice in driving rain unless efficient thigh leggings covering the knees are taken as well as ordinary leggings. I am not sure that an oilskin jacket with a groundsheet so arranged as to lace round the waist and afford complete protection to the legs and knees, would not make a

<sup>1</sup> See *Handbook of Light-Weight Camping*, p. 36.

good equipment for a pedestrian camper. There would certainly be a saving of weight. Appearances matter little in foul weather and lonely country.

I carried food for two days and a little over. My views about cooking have already been given. On any future trip, I should certainly cut down the load so as to make a small Primus possible. It saves time, labour, and bother; and, if the weather is bad, one can cook under cover at the tent door.

## XVI

### A CHAPTER OF INCIDENTS<sup>1</sup>

“O weary worker of the West, see to it that for a season in each year you live out of doors! Sleep beneath the stars. Eat the food that the woods and streams provide.”  
—H. A. VACHELL.<sup>2</sup>

“I spent the morning in doing the half-dozen odd jobs that always gather about the outset of a journey. Life contains many good moments, but few, I think, better worth living than those anticipatory ones passed in making ready to start for new, or indeed for familiar, hunting-grounds.”  
—H. HESKETH PRICHARD.<sup>3</sup>

## I

### ANGLING

WHEN trout fishing on the east Dart, I was standing quite still on a gravelly bank, changing a fly, when an otter came out of the river. It ran almost to my feet,

<sup>1</sup> The notes in this chapter are taken from my log-books.

<sup>2</sup> *Sport and Life on the Pacific Slope.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hunting Camps in Wood and Wilderness.*





A CORNER OF A LAYN.



and stayed for a moment looking at me, before plunging back. On another occasion, when fishing in Cornwall from a rock in the sea, a sea-otter, a beast rarely seen, came out from a hole in the rocks just below where I was sitting, gazed at me, and then dived into the waves.

The following incident happened when fishing with wet flies in a heavy mill stream in Berkshire: "I went a little lower down, where there was some rough and rapid water. About the third cast I hooked a fish, a big one. The line flew out. There was a commotion in the water, and then a noble fish leapt high. I played him with care, for the cast was a fine one, and slowly we worked downstream. He leapt repeatedly: I should say a fish of about 3 lbs., perhaps more. This went on for five or ten minutes. At last, having reached a convenient place, I gave him the butt. I was half-conscious of a little puzzlement just at the end: I noted with momentary surprise that

the fish seemed to move instantaneously a few feet. But I did not guess what had happened. I reeled in; and again was puzzled to see not a very big fish, and then to recognize it as a grayling. However, he had to be landed, and all this passed in a moment, and also in a moment of the usual preoccupation with the business in hand. I landed the grayling, and with the quick motion of the net I felt a slight jerk. There was a splash; and then, too late, I realized what had happened. Just a moment before reeling in, I must, without knowing it, have hooked this grayling on the second fly. This wretched beast deceived me into supposing that he was the big fish I had been playing. The trout—for trout it certainly was—broke me as I drew the net quickly and unguardedly under the grayling, and went off with the tail fly. This grayling was a decent fish, but my wrath was kindled against him.”

During a September visit to Newburgh,

Aberdeenshire, I used sometimes to fish for sea trout from a sandy bank out in the middle of the river which just there is very wide. Late one evening, "when it was horribly dark and wild, owing to an exceptionally violent squall, I hooked a big fish (on a light trout rod). At first I thought from the weight and the bad light that I had got a mass of sea-weed. I was about to jerk the line clear when a splash warned me that a fish was there. He then ran away with fully 30 yards of line. I followed him down about 100 yards and came to a point where I could go no further. Then began a tussle. I played that fish for half an hour. I thought at first it was a salmon, but the few glimpses I got of him in the turbid water satisfied me that it was a magnificent trout. His strength was tremendous. I could not move him for minutes together, but stood there with the rod bent nearly double. Some sand had got into the reel, and it did not run very well, which was a bother. It grew very dark, and the rain-

storms were furious. Out there alone, in mid-river on the flats, it was wild and exciting enough. My cast was a fine one, and I dared not use much force. At last I decided to put pressure on him. Again and again he resisted and recovered the line. But in the end I got him in near. At last I got him near enough to try to net him. But the net was too small, and the darkness and lashing water were confusing. I missed him, and he nearly broke me owing to the net catching in a dropper. I worked him in again, and he was now clearly tiring. Again I fozzled him: the conditions were really difficult. The net caught again: he got a straight pull on the gut between himself and the net, and in a flash he was gone."

. . . . .

I was once fishing in a stretch of free water on the canalized Kennet with a minnow on a fly rod. I had no luck, and as my train was due, I took my rod down, and went to the station. There I found I had made a mistake, and that my train did not go

for another twenty minutes. I went back to the river, cast into a swirly bit of water, hooked a trout instantly, landed him after a struggle, and caught the train. He weighed  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.

One rough August evening, when the upper Towy was in spate, I was fly-fishing for trout. Suddenly "about four yards below me a salmon rose, not at my fly. I moved upstream a little and cast over him. At the third cast, he took me, quietly, and then went surging off into midstream. There he stayed, moving but little. I had no net. I blew my whistle, and the boys who were having supper came running down from the tent, and fetched the net. The fish swirled about a bit. I was in an awkward place: above and below, the banks were impassable. I reeled in a little. Then came a swirl; and about 20 feet from where the line entered the water, a splendid fish leapt. I was broken, and knew at once that he had taken the dropper, which was on a fine point. The

odds were all against landing him, and I was so delighted with having hooked him at all that I was not much disappointed at losing him : less so than the boys."

Two days later, having mounted a stronger cast, I duly hooked and landed that fish or his fellow.

Later in the same week, the river being still in flood, "I hooked and held a big fish. I looked at my watch : it was 12.45. He took line furiously and alarmed me. I had only about 30 to 40 yards ; and just below me there were bushes and thickets along the bank and deep water under them. I had no waders on ; and if I had had, I could not have gone more than 20 yards downstream. However, I pulled up my trousers and prepared to get wet. This I very soon did, as the fish bored downstream. Luckily he did not go out of reach, and in these rushes, of which there were many, I was able to stop him in time and fight back to the upper part of the run. At times he sulked. I threw stones behind him to scare him upstream. I



scared him all right, but he did not always go upstream as desired. At times he fought furiously, and I feared he would break the tackle, though I had on a strong lake cast. Several times I saw the fish, though he never broke water. Salmon or sewin, he seemed to me about a yard long, and at least 10 lbs. or 12 lbs., a heavy weight for the little rod. When he rushed, I could do little with him; but I was able by pressure to move him nearer and to weary him. Sometime before the end, I thought he was tiring. At length, however, he went hard downstream. I went after him, stopped him, and held him. Perhaps I put too much pressure on him; or the line may have cut across the edge of a rock. Anyhow, exactly forty minutes after hooking him, the line parted, and all was over. Of course, it was a blow; but the fight was something to remember."

Like most fishermen, I have had my share of bad days as well as good ones. I think that the moment when my luck

touched bottom was this. Here is the entry: "Tired of sitting in the tent, I went out fishing. It was raining quietly and steadily, and the hills were heavy with vapour. There was a pause of a few minutes in the everlasting rain, and a patch of blue sky showed, only to vanish. The weather reverted to its vilest. The evening was notable. During two hours' fishing, I had two rises, both from small fish, one of which I foul-hooked and the other I missed. Then my rod, my trusty and well-beloved companion for nearly six years, snapped in my hand. The continuous wet had undermined its constitution,<sup>1</sup> and I had felt it weakening. I bound it up, and cast very gently. My fly caught in a snag, and I lost the only good cast I had left. Then I returned to camp, in the rain."

. . . . .  
<sup>1</sup> It was a split-cane.

## II

## CAMPING

On my first cycle-camping tour, which happened in March, I rode from Berkshire into Carmarthenshire. I crossed the Severn at Arlingham Passage, the ancient ferry. The weather was grey and cold, the sky full of snow. "One comes on the Passage suddenly. I noted the huge stone pillars marking the miles to it. The Severn channel is big here, and to-day it was swept by a bitter wind. It is a desolate shore; fearfully muddy, and rather precipitous. After waiting awhile, I saw a man rowing over from the Monmouthshire side. He had to go a long way down the river in order to get across. I unloaded the bicycle. The ferryman relieved me of the two bigger packages, and with the cycle and the rest I made a *détour* through barbed wire, and mud, and down miry slopes (where I nearly came to grief) to get to the boat, which was some way down

the river. The old man, a picturesque, weather-beaten, cheery soul, had on high waders. He carried the packages and the bicycle to the boat, which was out in the stream; and then he carried me on his sturdy back. We had interesting talk about the changed conditions of the ferry, which once was of great importance but now is little used. He said the ferry had once been rented at £100, but now was worth hardly £10. He spoke of old days, when black cattle from Wales were taken over by hundreds. We talked about the war. He was anxious to know my views about the angels at Mons, in whose appearance he himself fervently believed."

. . . . .

My first night cycle-camping was spent in a thicket by a little stream on a Berkshire common. "My initiation was to be severe. The night was very stormy. The wind roared in the trees above my site, but fortunately the tent was perfectly sheltered, and suffered nothing from the

squalls.<sup>1</sup> Rain fell fairly often, and very hard at times. I slept rather little, partly owing to the roar of the gale, and partly through inability to devise a satisfactory pillow. I kept perfectly warm. I got up at 7.15. It began to rain soon: then to sleet: and finally to snow in earnest. Very large flakes fell thickly, and soon all the ground was white, and the trees too. The scene in this little combe with the thickets and russet bracken was very pretty; the tent reminded me of a Canadian trapper picture. But the bad weather was a nuisance. I had to do all the packing I could inside the tent, which trebles the labour. The snow quickly covered everything exposed, and was difficult to brush off. The tent itself was most refractory. It was thickly covered with snow, which adhered obstinately. In the end I had to pack it up stiff and heavy with wet. Then the snow stopped, and a furious thaw set in, so that to touch a

<sup>1</sup> I was alone. The tent used was extremely small, home-made, and known by the suggestive name of "Little Ease."

branch was to catch a shower-bath. I was not ready to start till noon."

Camped behind a wall, on the top of the Cotswolds, I had my first experience of a snowfall at night. "I turned in about 10. Soon afterwards I heard a very small rustling, which at first I took to be cats on the prowl. The sound gradually increased, and I perceived that it was fine rain or sleet. I thought little about it until some time later, when I was just dropping off. Then I heard a curious sort of little scampering movement, as of a cockchafer (only there are no cockchafers now), or a very small mouse, running about on the sloping canvas at the head of the tent. I struck the canvas, and the noise became more marked. Then I realized that it was snow slipping down the canvas outside. Wherever I struck the canvas these little avalanches occurred. The patter of snow grew very steady. . . . At 3 I realized that I was well snowed in. Nothing came inside beyond a trifling

speck or two. I had kept perfectly warm. . . . I woke again at 7. The sky was then blue, the sun out, and the air still. . . . The tent fastenings were frozen hard, and I had to thaw them with warm water. All round the skirting of the tent there was a bank of snow about a foot deep."

. . . . .

A snowfall became a common event during this expedition, and the last night under canvas in Carmarthenshire was the worst. "Towards evening the sky became woolly and overcast. Soon after dark it began to snow. I took little notice at first, but when I woke at 1.30, I perceived that a heavy fall was taking place. At 4, when I woke again, I found I was snowed up. I slept on till after 7, and turned out at 8.45. On looking out I saw deep snow. Later I found that nearly a foot, in places more than that, had fallen. Snow was banked high all round the tent. It was impossible to open the door fully without digging away the snow. The bucket was nearly

buried. . . . I dug my way out with a tin plate. The scene was one of Arctic winter. The little tent was half buried; certainly, at the lower end, the snow was more than half way up the roof. Inside it was quite dry, and I had not felt the cold at all."

. . . . .

"I have discovered a superb breakfast dish for one. Split open a brace of small trout; sprinkle liberally with bread crumbs and bits of crust, and fry in butter with an egg. The result is perfectly delicious. . . . This mixture was due to necessity, but it is a grand invention."

. . . . .

"Yesterday a small incident happened so singular as to deserve a note. Most of us have experienced what may be called the 'cussedness of inanimate nature'; *e.g.* the invariable tendency for the particular thing you want to be at the very bottom of a sack or bag. This cussedness is so much a law of nature that one expects it—especially in camping, sailing, or any practical pursuit—



and would be surprised at any deviation from it. Mark this, therefore. Yesterday a pan of boiling water was standing on the Primus. In leaning forward to get something, I knocked it over. The whole contents, without—as far as I could see—the loss of a single drop, fell neatly into another pan which happened to be lying by the side of the Primus. Had they not done so, one of us might have been scalded, and the tent floor, ground blanket, and other things would have been deluged. Here is an exception to the general and unkind law which seems to govern such phenomena, and it seems worthy of solemn record.”

The wettest and stormiest month I have ever known was the August of 1917. We were encamped then in the upper valley of the Towy. There may be a sombre interest in these abbreviated entries from the log-book.

*Aug. 4.*—Arrived at the site. Weather dull and still. River very low.

*Aug. 5.*—Still. Overcast with occasional sun. Some rain at night. River rose six inches.

*Aug. 6.*—Still. Cloudy and hot. Some rain in the evening.

*Aug. 7.*—Very fine, hot day.

*Aug. 8.*—Rained from 5 a.m. till now (10.30 p.m.).

*Aug. 9.*—Very wet, and rather stormy night. Cleared at noon. Breezy. Showers, some heavy, later. River high and stained. About 8 p.m. it began to rain hard, and to blow. Between 10 and 12 it blew and rained furiously. Violent squalls. At 11.15 I had a look round: a wet, dark, and wild night. Wind blew hurricane lamp out. After midnight it quieted down.

*Aug. 10.*—Sun with white clouds. Cool, fresh wind. Lovely day so far (11.30 a.m.). River high, but falling. Later: a fine day with one or two showers till 8 p.m., when it began to rain. Frequent heavy showers most of the night.

*Aug. 11.*—When I woke, it was raining hard. Very heavy showers at breakfast-time. Fine later: doubtful if it will last. Later: weather bad: constant succession of heavy rainstorms, some of much violence. River very grand: a broad, rushing, peaty torrent. It has risen several feet. At night things improved a little. Starlit at 11.15.

*Aug. 12.*—When I awoke at 6.30, it was

raining and stormy-looking. About 9 a.m. it came fair: soon after, rain began again heavily and with a gusty wind. One gets weary of the noise of rain on canvas. Frequent showers and squalls all day, except for a dry interval after tea. A quiet night.

*Aug. 13.*—When I woke, it was raining. Weather better, though showery. Heavy rain in the evening. Sky full of rain, and no sign of change. No wind, however, and things could be worse.

*Aug. 14.*—Last night the weather reached what, I hope, was the climax of atrocity. After the deluge before supper there was a brief pause. About 9.15, thunder; and from then till 12.15 we had thunder and lightning and tremendous downpours. No wind. About 3.30 a.m. there was another cloud-burst. I have seldom, if ever, heard such a roar on the tent roof. It was not easy to sleep. When I woke about 7 it was raining steadily and the outlook was bad. We got up in the rain, had a good breakfast, and sang hunting songs. Then it cleared, and the sun shone, but not for long. River higher than ever. In the evening, a tremendous thunder shower. Quiet night, but it rained much.

*Aug. 15.*—Dry but dull. Wind went westerly: little rain and some hot sunshine. Rained a little at night.

*Aug. 16.*—Wind still W. and N.W.; light

showers. Gusty. After supper, the sky looked bad and the wind veered S.W. Soon began to rain.

*Aug. 17.*—From early this morning it has been raining and blowing hard from S.W. Hard at it when we turned in. Rained much in the night.

*Aug. 18.*—When I woke at 7 it was raining hard. Soon after, the wind went W. a vigorous drying wind; some sunshine; occasional showers. Dried everything, watching for showers warily. River as high as ever. At dinner-time, the mess tent was battered violently by the wind and slightly torn. Moved the whole camp to the other side of the field to a more sheltered position. Wind now roaring through the hedge behind us.

*Aug. 19.*—Fine. Showers and some N.W. wind; but drier and more settled. River falling.

*Aug. 20.*—Fine, misty morning. Hot and fine till noon, when a heavy shower fell. Weather degenerated: turned showery and dull.

*Aug. 21.*—Showery and dull. Towards evening very gloomy. Rained much at night.

*Aug. 22.*—Fairly promising morning. Showers later. Rain and a gusty tiresome wind in the afternoon. Some thunder. Sky full of low grey clouds; wind between S.W. and S.E. At night, the weather reverted to

its worst: violent S.W. wind and constant heavy storms of rain.

*Aug. 23.*—Rain and wind again: cleared slightly about noon, but heavy bursts of rain and wind continued. River as high as ever. Surely a memorable August. Cleared a little at 6 p.m. At 8, a smashing downpour and furious squall: showers later. At 9.30 p.m. pouring with rain. We are all fit and cheerful; but it is trying. At times to-day it has been impossible to do anything outside without being caught in a sudden downpour.

*Aug. 24.*—2.20 a.m. I have never in my life known anything like the astounding downpour which has taken place during the last 20 minutes. Simply terrific. Later: wet and stormy as usual. S.W. gale: rained all day till about 6 p.m. when it held up. At night, dry, but very stormy.

*Aug. 25.*—Dry but cloudy. A little sunshine; but rain soon came on. Rained much later in the day. Clouds low on the hills. Summer seems a far-away memory. The wind surges through the hedge; but one's spirits go up at the least sign of fair weather. The boys are wonders: no grouching: and everybody is fit.

*Aug. 26.*—Rained heavily last night: and still at it when I woke. No wind. Dryish intervals. Towards night, inclined to be stormy. Steady rain.

*Aug. 27.*—Wonder of wonders! a fine morning! Cloudless: sun shining over the hill at 7.30 a.m. *During our stay it has never done this at this hour before.* Before the end of the morning, it clouded over and rain returned. 7 p.m. The weather fairly out-Herods Herod. About 3.30 p.m. the wind went N.E. and blew hard, with torrents of rain. This caught the tents on the exposed side, and I had much work to protect them. 9.30 p.m. Easily the worst of our bouts of bad weather. Rain and squalls furious. The boys have been playing games in the Dome: H. said they had had "a lovely time." Outside, it was about as vile as it could be. Continued my labours to secure the tents: 2 to 3 hours' work.

*Aug. 28.*—Last night the weather moderated a little, but it continued wet and stormy, and was so when I woke. All the tents stood the night safely, except the sanitary tent which was blown to pieces. The downpour is unceasing. T. W. says the oldest people do not remember such an August. River very high. Later: in the afternoon it held up a little. River higher than ever before. Wind high, and the sky angry-looking. Showers and squalls in the evening. At night, it rained hard. The boys in high spirits. They do their camp work like Trojans: all go barefoot, which is much the best plan for them.

*Aug. 29.*—Last night was wild, wet, and

stormy: some of the squalls and flurries were tremendous. Difficult to sleep owing to the uproar. When I woke, it was raining and blowing hard. River higher than I have yet seen it. The last two nights I have only partially undressed, as one never knows what may happen to the tents, securely fastened down though they are. After raining heavily, it cleared a little later on. Some blue sky. Looks very unsettled; but somehow I am more hopeful of a general improvement than I have been for some time. For the first time for many days, I turned in to-night without the rattle of rain on the roof and the roar of wind outside.

*Aug. 30.*—Last night was quiet and dry. Fairly fine this morning. Later: the weather really is heart-breaking. After the slight improvement, the bad weather came back. Raining hard. Our month is almost over: we have had but one day without rain. Rained heavily in the evening. P. (aged 10) said to-day at tea, quite seriously: "I think this is lovely weather." They have got some happy game on in their tent.

*Aug. 31.*—Some wind early, but a fine morning. Somehow I think a change has come. Later: raining steadily.

*Sept. 1.*—Weather at its old tricks again. Rained nearly all night: now blowing and raining from S.W. Cleared later. There is less

vice about the weather than there was. The bad bouts are not so violent nor so long.

*Sept. 2.*—A fine, jolly day.

*Sept. 3.*—Again fine.

*Sept. 4.*—A perfect morning.

Thus during the last few days of our stay the weather recovered. The newspapers contained many references to the extraordinary weather in mid-Wales, but none that I saw did justice to it. According to the *Times*, the worst day was August 28. But the day which caused us most anxiety was August 27, when the wind first blew savagely from the N.E. and then swung suddenly round to its old quarter, S.W.

The final note in the log-book says: "Bad weather does not make me or any of us love camping less. We are full of plans for next year. Never have I enjoyed a summer holiday more."

The coldest weather I have known in camp was at an Easter camp, at a height of 1,100 feet near Llyn Berwyn among the



Cardiganshire hills. There were three of us, and our tent was a Dome. Here are the weather notes :

*March 20.*—Started in a snowstorm. Arrived at Tregaron : dark, cold, stormy, and sleet driving.

*March 21.*—Cold. Reached site and pitched tent on ground clear of snow. Snow on the hills.

*March 22.*—To the llyn. Edges of the llyn fringed with big icicles. At sunset the pink glow on the snowcapped hills was very lovely.

*March 23.*—Last night the water in the cans inside the tent froze : waders, etc. outside, frozen stiff. My line froze to the rod-rings constantly.

*March 24.*—Less cold ; but froze hard at night. Slipped, when wading in the llyn : my right wader filled. Startlingly cold. Ran home and changed.

*March 25.*—My wet garments will not dry owing to the frost. Water in the tent froze again.

*March 26.*—Stream full of ice. My reel, which had got wet when I fell, froze hard. B. arrived : found him paddling in the stream with bare feet : to get them warm, he explained. A hardy person.

*March 27.*—Warmer : no frost. Some rain and squalls. Thunderstorm.

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*March 28.*—A fall of snow, 2 or 3 inches. Very still at night.

*March 29.*—More snow fell to-day: about 6 inches. Freezing in the shade.

*March 30.*—Some of the drifts on the hills are 2 or 3 feet deep. More snow at night. Aspect of the hills is very fine: a wild, wintry scene.

*March 31.*—More snow last night. A heavy snowstorm at midday: then it cleared and began to thaw.

*April 1.*—Much snow disappeared. At night, frosty again. Water inside the tent froze.

*April 2.*—Fine. Rapid thaw. Froze hard at night.

*April 3.*—Mild. This is said to be the worst lambing season for 20 years. We see pitiable sights: dead sheep and deserted lambs. Two lambs we have picked up and taken to the farm; otherwise they must have died. Several dead sheep are about. The crows or kites wait till they see them on their backs, and then pick their eyes out. One was still alive when thus mutilated. Beside it lay a lamb, with its belly ripped open. B. picked up a sheep which could not stand, and found it astonishingly light. Lack of food, owing to frost and snow, is the cause of these casualties.

*April 4.*—Warmer. For the first time, it was not freezing when we left the llyn.

*April 5.*—Fine.

After this there was no more snow, and the weather though often cold and blustering became milder. Throughout the camp, we never suffered from the cold.

. . . . .

For a closing picture, I take this account of a rough September day in Cornwall many years ago. My wife and I were alone. Our tent was an enlarged Gipsy, similar in design to those described by Mr Lowndes in his book on Gipsy tents.

“It has rained to-day with little cessation for about 14 hours, most of it hard, driving rain, scudding before the wind. After breakfast, I went up to the post; and for the first time realized to the full how sheltered our camp is. On the crest, a south-west gale took me aback. Near the village a squall of rain came on so furious that Doone<sup>1</sup> and I had to crouch under a wall. The rain rushed across the field horizontally, and instantly soaked whatever of me was not covered by oilskins. The lane was a series of pools.

<sup>1</sup> Our St Bernard dog.

“I came back and settled down to read and write. I wrote several letters. As I was finishing the last, three or four tremendous squalls came down the hillside, and gave the tent a rude shaking. She stood it out nobly; never was there a drier, stauncher, steadier tent than this of ours. But these squalls were ugly, and no one could say a big one might not blow us over. Heavy iron hooks on our fire-rod outside were every one flung off; a pot was sent flying down the slope; and altogether we felt that something must be done before dark to make things more secure.

“Once more I got into my oilskins. First of all I drove the fire-prop up to its head in the cliff behind, and made a strong stay of rope from it to the baulk. Then I went down to the cove to fetch up stones to weight the skirting down more heavily. This was a stubborn business. I chose six stones, each full weight, to carry up the cliff path. Grass and rocks were horribly slippery and treacherous; and all the while the wind beat this way and that, and now

and then rain came lashing down. I had to make four stages in getting them up; and altogether I shall look back on getting those six stones up from the shore as one of the toughest jobs I ever did. It took more than an hour.

“I was content with the result. Anyhow, the cover will not blow away now. The worst that could happen would be for the wind to snap a rod or rods. To see the way the wind bangs the tent about one would think this might happen at any moment. But we have plenty of faith in the old ship yet.”

## XVII

### A LONELY LLYN

“And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake.”—TENNYSON.

HIGH up in the Welsh hills there is a llyn which is known to few. An awkward stretch of bog divides it from the rough track which meanders through the tangle of hills. The nearest village is five miles down the steep valley. Though the llyn is known to contain good trout, few fishermen come to it. Its solitude is rarely disturbed. Now and then a mounted shepherd will pass against the skyline and disappear. The sheep, the wild ducks, the crows, the gulls, and the curlews have it all to themselves.

For me this llyn has a strong fascination, and the story of it is this. One day at the beginning of April I visited it for the first time. A fierce north-east wind was blow-

ing, and cold rain was driving. A more forbidding day there could hardly be. Yet after a while the fish began to rise. At the end of the day I had half a dozen superb trout, ranging from a pound and a half to three-quarters. Besides this, I had had many rises, and two or three fish had been lost. I came down from the hills vowing to return on the morrow. But on the morrow, duty called me home.

The memory of that day of thrilling sport stayed with me; and since then I have been to that llyn many times, at two seasons, late summer and early spring. I have caught fish there, but the triumph of the first day has never been repeated, nor even approached. Once I landed three; at other times one only; usually, none. I cannot say why. Weather sometimes has seemed to offer an explanation; it is, of course, vain to fish when there is hardly a ripple. Bitter cold may seem unfavourable, and doubtless it is; yet I have caught trout there when the edges of the llyn were fringed with icicles a foot long, which had

formed upon the rushes, when snow and sleet darkened the air, and when my line froze to the rod-rings. I have been there in rain and dry, in tempestuous gales and gentle breezes. I have seen the llyn lashed by hail in a passing thunderstorm, and strange it was to hear the roar of the hail-storm as it swept across the water. I have been there many a time at sunset, when every detail of the encircling green hills has been reflected in the glassy surface, and the arch of heaven has been filled with colour. Yet these varieties of weather have affected the fishing hardly at all. There was the remembered day when the fish rose to the fly with insatiable zest. There has never been another like it. Why, I cannot tell.

And yet, though such fishing brings moods of deep depression, though after casting methodically right round the llyn and wading its rough shores without a single rise or sign of fish one vows to return no more, the fascination of the place remains. The next day one breasts the steep climb



with renewed ardour and with assured confidence that luck will change. It seems so reasonable to think so, for was there not that famous day, and must there not be others like it? Tactics shall be changed, a new fly shall be mounted. And when the rise does come, that sudden assaulting splash, and the beautiful and lusty trout is testing your skill and the fine gut, is there not repayment for the blank hours? For in this llyn there are no fingerlings. A half-pounder is a rarity here. If you have any luck at all, you will be catching pink-fleshed pounders that fight hard and long.

The creel may often be light, and disappointment frequent, yet there is a spell about the lonely llyn that never fails. It cannot be wholly analysed. In part, it is beauty, ever changing; in part, it is remoteness and unsullied peace; and in part it is the tantalizing lure of sport. In part, too, there may be something provocative in these mysterious waters and the whims which move their fishy population. It is

a place which generates impatience and even despair; yet it is both restful and challenging. It has, or seems to have, a personality obstinately veiled; and therein, perhaps, dwells its secret charm.

## APPENDIX

1. The most comprehensive work on camping known to me is *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life, Travel, and Exploration* (715 pp.), by W. B. Lord and T. Baines, published in 1876. It embodies an immense experience gained in different parts of the world, and is designed for the guidance of travellers and explorers in uncivilized regions. The bulk of it is, therefore, irrelevant to the purposes of the holiday camper at home, and not a little of it is now out of date. Nevertheless, the book is full of entertainment and instruction for anyone who is interested in the practical problems of camp life and exploration.

2. Several references have been made in the text to *Gipsy Tents and how to use them*, by G. R. Lowndes (Horace Cox, the *Field Office*). No better introduction to the subject of camping can be desired. Though primarily devoted to an explanation of the principles and mode of making the true Gipsy tent, the book contains much valuable information about camping

generally, and is inspired by the true camping spirit.

3. *Camping Out*, by A. A. Macdonell (G. Bell & Sons), is a volume in the "All England Series." The treatment of the subject is conventional and limited. Special attention is given to boating camps. It contains useful information (which, however, since the date of publication was 1892, is now in need of revision) about waterways at home and abroad.

4. *The Tramp's Handbook*, by H. Roberts (John Lane), one of the "Country Handbooks," is a useful and interesting little book. It contains many things not generally known about wild food, roadside cookery, weather wisdom, and the like. It is intended not only for campers, but for vagrants in general.

5. *The Camper's Handbook*, by T. H. Holding (Simpkins, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.) is a most detailed treatise. Mr Holding is a strong advocate of light-weight camping, of which, indeed, he is one of the originators, and he has minutely studied the devices for reducing camp kit to the lightest possible proportions. The book, which is amply illustrated, abounds in valuable hints, and no one who contemplates cycle-camping, or indeed camping of any kind,

can fail to profit by Mr Holding's knowledge and ingenuity.

6. *The Handbook of Light-Weight Camping* (1920), published by the Council of the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland (4 New Union Street, Moorfields, London, E.C.2), is a comprehensive and valuable mine of useful information. It embodies the experience and ingenuity of very many campers. The diagrams of light-weight tents, and the instructions how to make them are admirably clear. Membership of the Camping Club entitles the member to a copy of the Handbook, and of other publications. In association with the Club is the supply depot known as the "Camp and Sports Co-operators, Ltd.," where light-weight tents and camp equipment can be obtained.

7. *Light Camping Kit and how to make it*, by James H. Wood (Routledge & Sons), gives in short compass an account of different kinds of light tents, and directions, clearly illustrated, how to make them and the necessary equipment.

8. Two books on caravanning may be read with advantage by the camper. They are *The Whole art of Caravanning*, by Bertram Smith (Longmans, Green, & Co.), and *The*

*Book of the Caravan*, by L. C. R. Cameron (L. Upcott Gill).

9. *The Art of Travel*, by Francis Galton, F.R.S. (John Murray), is a classic. There is not a dull page in it. The edition in my possession is the seventh, dated 1883; probably there are later ones. As in the case of the larger work by Lord and Baines, much of *The Art of Travel* is concerned with questions outside the experience of the home camper; but there are many passages which are directly useful, and the treatment of the whole subject is so interesting, terse, and stimulating that no camper can fail to profit by it.

10. *Camp Craft*, by Warren H. Miller, Editor of *Forest and Stream* (B. T. Batsford), deals with camping as practised in the United States. It is an interesting book, but not of great use to the camper in this country owing to differences in the conditions.

11. *Life in the Open*, by Dugald Semple (G. Bell & Sons), deals briefly with camping and caravanning, and the advantages of an outdoor life. The author, who is an enthusiast, has written other books similar in character.

12. There are many books which deal with camping adventures. Among them may be

mentioned the famous *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, by R. L. Stevenson (Chatto & Windus); *The Forest*, by Stewart Edward White (Nelson & Sons), which describes Canadian camping: and *An Englishman in Ireland*, by R. A. Scott-James (J. M. Dent & Sons), which describes a camping voyage in a Canadian canoe on Irish waterways, including the Shannon.

13. Books and papers about camping are issued by the Boy Scouts' organization.





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